

THE

LIFE OF LUTHER,

IN FORTY-EIGHT HISTORICAL ENGRAVINGS

BY GUSTAV KŒNIG.

WITH EXPLANATIONS BY ARCHDEACON HARE:

CONTINUED

BY SUSANNA WINKWORTH.



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PREFACE.

This Work, which was commenced by Archdeacon Hare, was interrupted by his lamented death before he had completed it: under these circumstances, his family, having kindly placed at my disposal the books set apart for reference by the Archdeacon, requested me to continue the Work.

The principal authorities for it have been the biographies of Luther written by Melanchthon, Mathesius, Meurer, and Jürgens; Luther's "Briefe," edited by De Wette (Berlin, 1825–28); his "Tischreden," edited by Förstemann (Leipsig, 1844 – 48); and "Sämmtliche Werke," (Erlangen, 1826–55).

I beg also to acknowledge my obligations to the histories of the Reformation, by Ranke, Merle d'Aubigné, and above all to Dean Waddington's admirable work.

The extracts from Luther's writings and letters, though in some cases borrowed from Meurer, have always been verified by comparison with the original, except in the case of one or two tracts that will appear in the last few volumes not yet published, of the Erlangen edition of Luther's works, to which alone I have had access.

Not having been able to find in the works within my reach, any reference to the circumstance which forms the subject of Plate XLV., I have translated that section from Professor Gelzer's notes to the German edition of the Plates.

S. Winkworth.

Manchester, England.

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LIFE OF LUTHER.

I.

BIRTH OF LUTHER.

LUTHER was born at Eisleben, the capital of the Counts of Mansfeld, in Thuringia, between eleven and twelve o'clock on the night of the 10th of November, 1483. It was the eve of St. Martin's, by whose name he was baptized the next day, in St. Peter's Church in that town. In allusion to this, the artist has placed a picture of St. Martin on the right.

His father, Hans Luther, is kneeling, presenting his new-born child to God. Schlüsselburg says he had heard from Luther's relations that his father would often pray aloud and fervently, by the cradle of his boy, that God would grant him His grace, so that, bearing in mind his name (lauter, pure), he might labor for the propagation of pure doctrine. This bears the mark of a story modified at least by subsequent events, but agrees well with what we know of Hans Luther's character. He was an

honest, straightforward, simple-hearted German peasant, a miner in the Hartz mountains.

Luther himself indulged in the same play upon his name, when he begged that his godchild, Ratzeberger's daughter, should be called Clara, so that people might be reminded that Luther was her godfather; for "lauter" and "clear," he said, are sisters' children. In the early stages of his contest with Rome, he often signed himself "Eleutherius," and later in life, with the ever-deepening consciousness of his sinfulness, "Christi Lutum."

In his mother Margaret, Melanchthon says, were the other virtues becoming an honourable matron, and, above all, modesty, the fear of God, and prayer; so that other good women looked up to her as a model of virtues. When Luther had to draw up a Form of Marriage, he commemorated the names of his parents in the expression, "Hans, wilt thou have Greta to thy wedded wife?"

Among Luther's letters are two long ones, one written to his sick father, in February, 1530, a couple of months before his death; the other in May, 1531, to his mother, on her death-bed; both are full of Christian faith and hope and love.

The house in Eisleben in which Luther was born was several times preserved from fire by the pious reverence of the townsfolk, who pulled down the adjoining houses to keep off the flames; but in 1689 all except the ground-story was burnt down. It was built up again, however; and the room in which he was said to have been born was turned into a free school for poor orphans.



II.

LUTHER IS TAKEN TO SCHOOL.

"HANS LUTHER (says Mathesius), having been blessed by our kind and bountiful God in his labours, so that he had two furnaces or smelting ovens at Mansfeld, brought up his baptized son in the fear of God, from the well-earned produce of his mine, and, when the boy came to years of understanding, sent him, with a hearty prayer, to the Latin School, where Martin learnt his Ten Commandments, Child's Creed, and Lord's Prayer, diligently and quickly, along with Donatus, the Child's Grammar, Cisio Janus, and Christian hymns. For though the truth was obscured under Antichrist, God yet wonderfully preserved the sacred catechism in schools, along with infant Baptism in the parish Churches, for which we old people have to give thanks to our God and to the ancient schools."

Nearly half a century afterwards, Luther wrote in a Bible, which he gave to his brother-in-law, "To my dear old friend,

Nicholas Omeler, who carried me more than once in his arms, when I was a little child, to and back from school; when we neither of us knew that a brother-in-law was carrying a brother-in-law."

The rod in the schoolmaster's hand, and the boy crying behind his chair, are significant of the severity which prevailed in the schools of that age. Luther himself, in the Table-talk, c. xliii. § 155, says, "It is a sad thing when children look with dread on their parents, or scholars on their teachers, by reason of their harsh punishments. For many unwise schoolmasters spoil fine dispositions with their scolding, raging, beating, and flogging; treating the children much as a gaoler or scourger would a thief. The 'lupus' tables, the repetitions, 'legor, legeris, legire, legitur —cujus partis orationis'—these put children to the torture. I was beaten once at school, fifteen times in one forenoon. Every government ought to attend to the differences of character. Children must be punished and flogged; but, nevertheless, one ought to love them, as St. Paul commands the Colossians: 'Fathers provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged.'"

In other places, Luther speaks of the great improvement which had taken place in these respects since his boyhood, as in the Table-talk, c. lxvii. § 1. In the year 1539 Luther said, "What pleasant time and conveniences the young have nowadays for studying; for all the arts are now taught in good order and rightly, so that any one can easily catch them, unless he is a blockhead. Nor are the boys treated so harshly. Of yore, the young were brought up with too much severity, so that at school

they were called martyrs. Especially were they plagued with their 'lupus,' and cases, and tenses, which yet were of no use, very irksome, and wearisome, a mere waste of time, and whereby many a good wit was spoilt."



III.

LUTHER, IN HIS SCHOOLDAYS, SINGS BEFORE THE HOUSE OF DAME URSULA COTTA, AT EISENACH.

MATHESIUS relates that "when Martin was in his fourteenth year, his father sent him to a school at Magdeburg. There the boy, like the children of many respectable and even wealthy men, went about begging for bread, and cried out his 'Panem propter Deum.' That which is to be great must begin by being little: and if children are bred up too tenderly and grandly, it harms them all their life long. The next year he went to school at Eisenach. Here, also, he sang awhile at doors for his bread, until a godly matron, Cotta by name, took him to her table; because she bore a strong affection to the boy for his singing and earnest prayers." This practice obtained a sanction in common opinion from that of the Mendicant Orders.

In his excellent sermon on the duty of sending children to school, Luther, after quoting those verses from the 113th Psalm, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust," &c., adds, "They say, and it is the truth, that the Pope himself was a schoolboy.

Therefore, despise not the lads who come to your doors, and cry 'Panem propter Deum,' and sing the bread-rimes, seeing that the Psalm tells us, you hear great princes and lords singing. I was such a morsel-craver once, and begged bread from door to door, especially at my dear town of Eisenach, although my good father kept me afterwards with all love and honesty at the High School at Erfurt, and, by the sweat of his brow, helped me to become what I am ; yet I was a morsel-craver, and, according to this Psalm, by my pen have come to this, that I would not change now with the Turkish Emperor, so that I should have his riches and lose my knowledge. Yea, I would not take the riches of the whole world in exchange, piled up many times over ; yet, without doubt, I should never have come to this, had I not gone to school, and learnt how to write. Therefore, let thy son go and study, even though he should have now and then to beg his bread : for thus thou wilt give our Lord God a fine piece of wood, out of which He may carve you a lord. It must continue to be as it has been, that thy son and mine—that is, the children of common folks—will have to govern the world, both in a spiritual and temporal sense, as this Psalm declares."

In Dame Cotta's house Luther received instructions in music, as is represented in the lower engraving.


BIBLIA SACRA
LIBER
SAPIENTIÆ
ARISTO-
TELES

IV.

LUTHER FINDS A LATIN BIBLE IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AT ERFURT.

"IN the year 1501 (says Mathesius), the young lad was sent by his parents to the High School at Erfurt. At this University he began to study his logic and other scholastic arts with great diligence and earnestness; and although by nature he was a hasty and merry fellow, he began his studies every morning with a hearty prayer and churchgoing; for this was his maxim, 'He who prays diligently has learnt more than half his lesson.' At the same time he never missed a lecture, often questioned his teacher, and talked reverently with him, and, when there was no public lecture, he spent his time in the University Library. There, one day, when looking carefully over the books to discover the good ones, he lighted on a Latin Bible, which he had never in his life seen before. Here he observed, with great surprise, that there were many more texts, epistles, and gospels in it, than were commonly expounded in ordinary postils, and in

church from the pulpits. As he was turning over the Old Testament, he met with the history of Samuel, and his mother Hannah ; this he read through hurriedly, with great pleasure and joy. And because all this was new to him, he began to wish from the bottom of his heart, that the good God would some time or other give him such a book for his own ; which wish and prayer was richly granted to him."

The exaggerated inferences which have been drawn from this story, concerning the scarcity of Bibles at the beginning of the sixteenth century, have been refuted by Mr. Maitland, in his Essays on the Dark Ages (p. 469). When we think of the bulk and the cost of a Bible at that time, it is not very surprising that the son of a Thuringian miner, whom his father seems to have intended for the law, should have reached his seventeenth year without ever having had one in his hands.

Jürgens, in his Life of Luther (i. p. 487), cites some passages from a Latin manuscript of the Table-talk, confirming the statement of Mathesius. The main interest and value of the fact is rather biographical than historical. The engraving represents how the schoolmen, with their head, Aquinas, and even Aristotle himself, are pushed aside under the delight of the new discovery.

In 1527, Luther wrote a letter to the people of Erfurt, which he prefixed to a work by his friend Menius. In this he tells them, " You have had a High School among you for very many years, in which I myself spent several years ; but this I will swear, that in all that time there was not a single true Christian

lecture or sermon delivered by any one, such as you may now hear in every corner. O how happy should I have thought myself then, if I could have heard a Gospel, or even a Psalm; whereas now you may hear the whole Scripture."



V.

LUTHER'S FRIEND ALEXIS IS KILLED BY A FLASH OF LIGHTNING CLOSE BESIDE HIM, ON A JOURNEY, WHEN THEY WERE TRAVELLING TOGETHER.

"AT the end of the year 1505 (says Mathesius), a dear friend of Luther's having been killed, and he himself having been much frightened by a tremendous thunderstorm, which terrified him with the thought of God's anger, and of the Last Judgment, he resolved in his own mind, and made a vow, that he would go into a convent, where he would serve God, and appease Him by saying masses, and gain eternal happiness by monastic sanctity."

Melanchthon too, in speaking of the terrors of conscience by which Luther was driven into a convent, says that he felt them for the first time, and with the greatest violence, in the year in which he lost a friend, killed by some accident. ("Hos terrores seu primum seu aurrimos sensit eo anno, cum sodalem nescio quo casu interfectum amisisset.")

The artist, for his purpose, has combined the two incidents, as though the friend had been killed by a thunderbolt. Jürgens

(i. p. 318) suggests that he more probably met his death in one of those duels which have for centuries been a main scandal of the German Universities ; and this agrees best with the expression used by Mathesius, " erstochen."



VI.

LUTHER ENTERS THE AUGUSTINIAN CONVENT, 1505.

MELANCHTHON relates that, in Luther's twenty-first year, suddenly, contrary to the expectation of his parents and kindred, he came to the convent of Augustinian monks at Erfurt, and asked to be received into it. "The reason of his entering on this mode of life, which he conceived to be the best suited for piety and religious studies, was this, as he was wont to tell, and as many know. Often, when he was meditating attentively on the wrath of God, or on wonderful examples of punishments, he was suddenly assailed by such terror that he almost fainted away. I myself once saw him, exhausted by his exertions in a doctrinal disputation, throw himself on a bed in the next chamber, where he repeated these words, intermixed with gesticulations, 'He concluded all under sin that He might have mercy upon all.'" Then follows the statement already quoted, that these terrors became more violent in consequence of the death of one of his friends. This is said to have taken place on St. Alexis' day (the

17th of July), 1505, whether Luther chose that day in memory of his lost friend, or whether the traditional name of his friend owed its origin, as is not improbable, to that of the saint's day. Jürgens, on the authority of a manuscript, says (i. 521) that on the eve of that day he invited a party of his friends to supper, enjoyed himself with them singing and playing, and when taking leave of them, said, "To-day you see me, but henceforward no more."

In 1521, when Luther published his "Treatise on the Invalidity of Monastic Vows," he dedicated it to his father, and says to him: "It is now come well nigh to the sixteenth year of my monkery, to which I betook myself without your knowledge and will. You had much care and fear for my weakness, for that I was only a young fellow of twenty-two, and that you had learnt from many examples that monkery turns out disastrously with many; you were also purposing to marry me richly and honourably, and thus to settle me in life. And this your fear and anxiety, and your displeasure with me, were for a time quite implacable; and the advice of all your friends was in vain, who said that if you wanted to offer a sacrifice to God, you should give Him what you held best and dearest. Yet at length you yielded your own will to God, but nevertheless did not lay aside your fear and anxiety; for I remember still too well when you were reconciled to me and spoke to me, and I said that I was called by a terrible apparition from Heaven. For I did not willingly become a monk, much less for the sake of feeding my belly; but when I was suddenly surrounded with terror and the anguish of

death, I vowed a compulsory and extorted vow. And immediately you said to me, 'God grant that it be not an imposture and a diabolical spectre.' This word, even as though God himself had spoken by your mouth, penetrated and sank to the bottom of my soul; but I stopped and blocked up my heart as much as I could against you and your word. Besides, there was yet another time, when I (as a son may with a father) complained of your anger; you smote and knocked me down in such wise, that in my whole life I have hardly heard a word from any man that more mightily entered into and seized me. For this was your word: 'Have you not also heard that we are to obey our parents?' Wrapped up in my own piety, I heard and looked down on you, but yet in my heart I never could think lightly of that word."



VII.

LUTHER IS ORDAINED PRIEST.

LUTHER'S ordination took place on the Sunday Cantate, the fourth after Easter, in 1507. His earliest remaining letter is one inviting his friend Braun, the vicar of Eisenach, to come to him on that occasion. In it he says, "Since our glorious God, who is holy in all His works, has vouchsafed so magnificently to exalt me, an unhappy and utterly unworthy sinner, and to call me by His pure and most bountiful mercy into His sublime ministry, it behoves me to show such gratitude to the infinitude of His divine bounty as a grain of dust can, by undertaking the office with which I am entrusted."

In his after life he often spoke of this day, and of his feelings on the occasion. Thus in the Table-talk (cxxxv. § 9) he says, "A man's first mass used to be highly esteemed, and brought in much money: it quite snowed with presents and offerings. The canonical hours were set out with torches. The dear young gentleman, if his mother was living, had to dance with her, so that

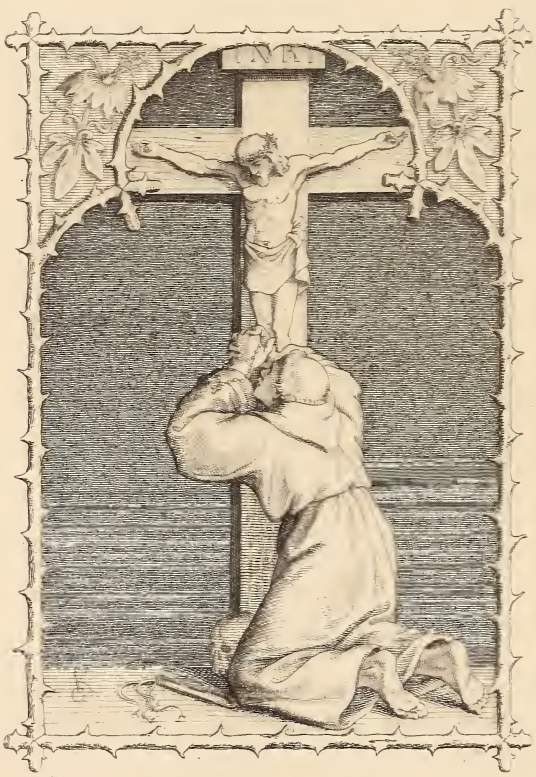
the spectators stood and wept for joy ; but if she was dead, he placed her under the cup, and released her out of purgatory. When I celebrated my first mass at Erfurt, I could almost have died ; for I had no faith [in Christ], but I thought solely how worthy I myself was, that I might avoid sinning, and omit nothing in the performance of the mass."

Again, in the commentary on Genesis, xxv. 21, when speaking on the difficulty and awfulness of prayer, he says, "That a man when praying should tremble and shrink, is not surprising, as formerly, when I was a monk, and first read in the canon of the mass, 'Te igitur clementissime Pater,' and 'Offerimus tibi vivo, vero et æterno,' I was utterly confounded and terrified by these words ; for I considered, who am I that I should address such majesty, when all are dismayed at the sight and conversation of any earthly king or prince." Again, in his exhortation to the clergy assembled at Augsburg in 1530, he says, "The Bishop who consecrated me, when he put the cup into my hand, said, 'Accipe potestatem sacrificandi pro vivis et mortuis.' That the earth did not swallow us both up, was too great a mark of God's patience."

Of the true dignity of the priesthood, Luther always retained the highest conception, as it is expressed in his sermon on the duty of sending children to school. "I hope that believers, and all who call themselves Christians, are aware that the spiritual class was founded and instituted by God, not with gold and silver, but with the precious blood and bitter death of His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For out of his wounds

the sacraments, as was represented of yore on paintings, do verily flow ; and He has dearly earned that there should be such an office in the whole world, to preach, to baptize, to loose, to bind, to minister the sacraments, to comfort, to warn, to admonish, with the Word of God, and whatever else belongs to the office of the cure of souls. For this office not only furthers and helps our temporal life, and all secular states of men, but gives eternal life, and releases from death and sins, which is its main business : indeed, the world stands and endures solely for the sake of this class ; else it would have perished long ago.

" I do not mean our present spiritual class, in convents and abbeys, with their prohibition of marriage : I mean that class which has the office of preaching, and the ministry of the Word and sacraments, which gives the Spirit and all blessedness, which one cannot obtain by any singing or processions ; such as the office of pastor, teacher, preacher, reader, priest, clerk, schoolmaster, and whatever else pertains to similar offices."



VIII.

LUTHER'S TROUBLES AND PENANCES IN THE CONVENT.

ALL the accounts of Luther's monastic life concur in representing him as tormented by the terrors of conscience, and as endeavouring to allay them by the severest penances and mortifications. Melanchthon's words have been quoted already.

Thus in his commentary on Genesis, one of his latest works, ch. xxix. v. 1, he says, "I too, formerly, when a monk, was much holier than I now am, as to outward forms, repeated more prayers, watched more, fasted more, vexed my flesh; in short, my whole life was very godly in the eyes of others, though not so in my own; for I was much troubled and afflicted. Now, on the other hand, I eat and clothe myself as others do, nothing marked or singular appears in my life. Then, when I was a monk, I did nothing else than waste my time, wear out my health, and wound my conscience with seeking justification by works; so that even now it can scarcely be healed. For, in addition to nature, in which the boasting of works is inwrought, I acquired

the habit and custom of looking at my own works and dignity. Now, however, I know for certain, that one lesson, one Lord's prayer, is more efficacious and more approved by God than all those liturgies which I mumbled over through those fifteen years; because I know that I am heard. Nor is there need of any watching or special fasting and abstinence, because God has given me this messenger of Satan, with other difficulties and crosses of this world, which try me far more than all those things."

Again, in ch. xxvii. v. 28, "We, too, when we were monks, profited nothing by our self-tormenting, because we would not recognize our sin and impiety; nay, we were ignorant of our original sin, and did not feel that incredulity was a sin, and inculcated and taught doubt concerning God's mercy. Therefore the more I ran and desired to come to Christ, the further He receded from me. After confession and saying mass, I never could be at peace in my mind; because the conscience cannot gain any firm consolation from works."

Again, in his Postil on the Epistle for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, "I, too, wished to be a holy and pious monk, and prepared myself with great devotion for mass and prayer. But when I was most devout, I went a doubter to the altar; a doubter I came back from it: if I had made my confession, I doubted; if I had not made it, I was in despair. For we were under the notion that we could not pray, and should not be heard, unless we were quite pure and sinless, like the saints in Heaven: so that it would be much better to give up praying, and do something else, than thus vainly to repeat the name of God."

Again, in his short answer to Duke George, in 1533, he says: "That the monks compared their monkery to Christ's baptism, they cannot deny. I, when I took the vows, was congratulated by the prior, the convent, and the confessor, that I was now like an innocent child, coming pure from its baptism. And verily I would gladly have rejoiced at such a noble act, that I had become an excellent man, as to have made myself so grand and holy by my own deed, without Christ's blood, so easily and quietly. But though I loved to hear such sweet praises and fine words about my own doings, and let myself be esteemed a conjuror who could make himself holy in such a paltry way, and could devour death and the devil, yet it would not hold. When any petty assault of death or sin came against me, I fell, and found no help either in baptism or monkery: I had so long lost both Christ and His baptism. Then I became the most miserable man upon earth; day and night I howled and was in despair, and no man could help me. In such way was I bathed and baptized in my monkery, and had the true sweating sickness: God be praised that I did not sicken unto death, or I should long ago have been at the bottom of hell with my monkery. For I knew Christ no more, except as a severe judge, from whom I desired to fly, and yet could not escape."



IX.

LUTHER RESTORED BY MUSIC.

LUTHER had a very strong love for music, and its power over him was great. When he was afflicted with a fit of melancholy, he used to seek comfort therein. Seckendorf (p. 21) says, that "once, when he had shut himself up in his cell for a couple of days without admitting any one, Edensberg, with some young musicians, knocked at the door, and, obtaining no answer, broke it open. There they found him lying in a fainting fit, and brought him back to life, not so much by medicine or food, as by a 'consort of music.'"

In the Table-talk (c. lxviii.) Luther speaks of this power of music. "One of the most beautiful and noblest of God's gifts is music. Satan is a great enemy to it, so that one can drive away many temptations and evil thoughts by means of it. The devil cannot abide it. It drives away the spirit of melancholy, as we see in King Saul. Music is the best solace to a man in sorrow; it quiets, quickens, and refreshes the heart. He who despises

music, as all fanatics do, will never be my friend. For music is a gift of God, not a human gift. Hence it drives away the devil, and makes folks cheerful; at the sound of it, one forgets all anger, lust, pride, and other vices. I give music the next place, and the highest honour, after theology. We see how David and all the saints clothed their godly thoughts in verses and songs, 'quia pacis tempore regnat Musica.'"



X.

LUTHER COMFORTED BY AN AGED MONK.

MELANCHTHON says that in his theological studies, Luther was much stimulated by his pangs and terrors of conscience; and "he often related that he was greatly comforted by the discourse of an old man in the college at Erfurt, who, when he talked to him about his internal conflicts, spoke much to him of faith, and referred him to the Creed, in which we declare our belief in the remission of sins. This article he interpreted as not merely declaring the belief that some persons will attain forgiveness, as the devils believe that David and Peter are forgiven, but as a Divine commandment that we should each of us believe our own sins to be forgiven. And this interpretation he confirmed by the saying of Bernard, in his sermon on the Annunciation. 'Moreover, then, you must believe this, that for His sake your sins are pardoned. This is the testimony which the Holy Spirit declares in your heart, saying, "thy sins are forgiven to thee."' By these words, Luther said, he was not only comforted,

but enlightened concerning the opinions of St. Paul, who so often inculcates that we are justified by faith."

Mathesius tells the same story. "While he studied and prayed in the convent day and night, chastening and wasting his body by fasting and watching, he was very uneasy and sorrowful, and even his masses gave him no comfort. Then God sent him an old brother in the convent for a confessor, who comforted him heartily, and directed him to the gracious forgiveness of sins, as it is proclaimed in the Apostles' Creed, and taught him, out of St. Bernard's sermons, that he was to believe, with regard to himself, that our merciful God and Father, by the one sacrifice and blood of His Son, had obtained the forgiveness of all sins, and caused this to be declared by the Holy Spirit in the Apostolic Church by the words of the Absolution. This was a living and mighty comfort to his heart; and he often spoke of his confessor with great honour and hearty thankfulness."

There are many observations and anecdotes of the deepest interest connected with this matter in the "Table-talk," c. xxvii.



XI.

LUTHER GIVES LECTURES AT WITTENBERG.

THE University of Wittenberg was founded by the Elector Frederic of Saxony, in 1502, with the advice of Dr. Martin Pollich, of Metrichstadt, and of Staupitz, who was vicar or superintendent over forty Augustinian convents in Thuringia. "Staupitz," Mathesius says, "having been charged to look out for learned men for the new University, and having perceived a peculiar aptitude and an earnest piety in Luther, removed Brother Martin, in the year 1508, to the convent at Wittenberg." Here, Melanchthon tells us, he lectured at first on Aristotle's Dialectics and Physics, meanwhile pursuing his favourite study of theological books.

Writing to his friend, Braun in March, 1509, Luther says, "If you wish to know my condition, I am well, through God's grace, except that I have to study violently, mainly in philosophy, which I would most gladly have exchanged from the

beginning for theology—that theology, I mean, which seeks out the kernel from the nut, and the flour from the wheat, and the marrow from the bones. But God is God: man is often, nay always, deceived in his judgment. He is our God; He will direct us with His loving-kindness, and for ever."

Among the hearers, in the engraving, we see Metrichstadt, who was Rector of the University, and who, according to Mathesius, used to say, "This monk will puzzle all our doctors, and will bring in a new doctrine, and reform the whole Roman Church; for he takes his stand on the writings of the prophets and the apostles, and on the word of Jesus Christ."

By his side sits Staupitz, to whom Luther said, in 1523, "Through you the light of the Gospel first dawned out of the darkness on my heart."



XII.

LUTHER PREACHES IN THE CONVENT CHAPEL.

LUTHER was so strongly impressed with the awful responsibility of preaching—"of speaking to the people in God's stead"—that Staupitz had great difficulty in persuading him to mount the pulpit. The chapel is described by Myconius as very rude and mean, much like the representation which painters give of the stable at Bethlehem, where Christ was born. "In this poor chapel," he says, "God willed that His holy Gospel, and His dear child Jesus, should be honoured and manifested to the world. It was no minster, or grand high church, such as were to be found by thousands, that God chose for this purpose. Soon, however, this church became too small, and Luther was commanded to preach in the parish church, and thus the child Jesus, also, was carried to the Temple."

Staupitz is represented sitting among the hearers.

Of the matter of his early sermons, Luther says in his postil for the fourth Sunday in Advent: "This testimony of Christ the

Devil will not hear, sets himself with all his might against it, and will not stop till he overthrows and extinguishes it. We men, too, are weak and perverse, and readier to draw nigh to any saint than to Christ. Under the papacy they preached about the worship of the saints, and that one should trust in their merits; so, too, I myself believed and preached. St. Anne was my idol, and St. Thomas (Aquinas) my apostle, on whom I built my assurance. Others ran to St. James, and had a strong belief and firm confidence that, if they did so, they would attain everything they wished and hoped for; so strongly disposed is man by nature to fall away from the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Christ."

Luther's conviction of the paramount dignity and importance of preaching he expresses perpetually; for instance, at the end of the Tract, On the Right of the Congregation to call and dismiss the Teachers, "He who is entrusted with the office of preaching, has the highest office in Christendom. He may also baptize, say mass, and perform all pastoral functions; or, if he does not choose this, he may confine himself to preaching alone, and leave baptizing and other minor offices to others, as Christ did, and Paul, and all the Apostles" (Acts vi.).



XIII.

LUTHER AT ROME.

IN the year 1510, Luther went, partly in consequence of a vow, partly on some conventual business, to Rome. He went as an enthusiastic devotee; but was greatly shocked by what he saw there, though the effects of it were not visible till some time after.

In his Table-talk, c. lxxvii., he says: "I would not take 100,000 florins not to have seen Rome; although I do not yet thoroughly know its great and scandalous abominations. When I first saw it, I fell on the ground, lifted up my hands, and said, 'Hail, thou holy Rome; yea, truly holy, through the holy martyrs, and their blood that has been shed there!' Had I not seen it, I should always have to fear that I was doing the Pope a wrong; but that which we have seen, that we speak."

In 1530, when dedicating his Exposition of the 117th Psalm to Hans von Sternberg, who had been a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Luther says to him: "Not that I despise such pilgrimages—for

I would gladly take such a journey myself, and now that I cannot, I am fond of hearing and reading about them—but that we do not make such pilgrimages with a right purpose. As was my case at Rome, where I, too, was a mad saint, ran the round of all the churches and vaults, and believed every lie that was invented there. I have also said mass there half a score of times, and in those days was quite sad that my father and mother were still alive; for I should have liked to have set them free from purgatory with my masses and other excellent works and prayers. There is at Rome a saying, 'Blessed is the mother whose son says mass on a Saturday at St. John's;' how glad I should have been to have made my mother happy! But there was too great a throng, and I could not get to it, and ate a red-herring instead. Well, then we did and knew no better, and the Romish See did not punish these current lies; but now, God be praised, we have the Gospels, the Psalms, and other Holy Scriptures, in which we may make pilgrimages with profit and blessedness, and may visit and explore the true Promised Land, the true Jerusalem, yea, the true paradise and kingdom of heaven; and walk about, not among the graves and bodily resting-places of the saints, but through their hearts, thoughts, and spirits."

The state of Luther's mind at Rome is indicated by the story that when he was mounting the Santa Scala on his knees for the sake of obtaining the indulgence granted to those who did so, he seemed to hear a voice of thunder shouting in his ears, "The just shall live by faith."

What most shocked Luther at Rome was the infidelity of the

priests. "I have been at Rome, he says, in his Treatise against Private Masses, "have said many masses there, and saw many said, so that I shudder when I think of it. There I heard, among other coarse jests, courtiers laughing at table, and bragging that some said mass and repeated these words over the bread and wine: 'Panis es, panis manebis, vinum es, vinum manebis,' and so elevated it. Now, I was a young and right grave, pious monk, whom such words wounded, what could I think? What could occur to me but such thoughts—if people here at Rome talk thus openly at table, what must it be if the Pope, cardinals, along with the courtiers, say mass in this way? how must I have been cheated, who have heard them say mass so often? And it disgusted me at the same time that they could say their mass so boldly and glibly and helter-skelter, as if it were a trick of juggling. For, before I got to the Gospel, my fellow-priest had finished his mass, and they cried to me, 'Passa, passa—get on, come away.'"



XIV.

LUTHER CREATED A DOCTOR.

MATHESIUS writes, that "in the year 1512, his prior and superior, along with the convent, resolved that Brother Martin should become a Doctor in the Holy Scriptures. This resolution Staupitz laid before him at Wittenberg, under a tree in the convent which he himself once showed to me and others. But as Brother Martin humbly excused himself, and, among many other causes, finally urged that he was a weak and sickly brother, who had not long to live, and that they should look out some one stouter and healthier, Staupitz answered playfully, 'It seems as if our God would soon have a great deal to do in heaven and upon earth, therefore He will need to have many young and industrious doctors, through whom He may transact His affairs; and whether you live or die, God wants you in His counsel. Therefore do what your convent imposes on you, as you are bound to obey it and me, according to your vow.'

"Hereupon, Brother Martin was promoted to be a Doctor.

of Holy Scripture on St. Luke's Day, and openly swore a solemn oath on the Bible that he would study and preach it all his life, and would maintain the Christian faith in discourse and writing against all heretics, so help him God. This regular and public call, which he received from a University in the name of the Imperial Majesty and of the See of Rome, according to the counsel and resolution of his teachers and spiritual superiors, and the solemn oath which he made to God on the Holy Bible and to the University of Wittenberg, was often a source of comfort to him in times of great pressure and conflict, when the devil and the world were terrifying him with the thought who had given him command, and how he would answer for it that he had excited such trouble in the whole of Christendom. Then, I say, he called to mind his ordained doctorship, and his public calling, and his solemn oath, and was comforted; whereupon he dauntlessly carried on his own cause, or rather God's, in Christ's name, with honour, and with God's help nobly accomplished it."

Carlstadt, as Dean of the Faculty, presides at the ceremony.



XV.

LUTHER ACTING AS VICAR-GENERAL OF THE AUGUSTINIAN ORDER IN THE ABSENCE OF STAUPITZ.

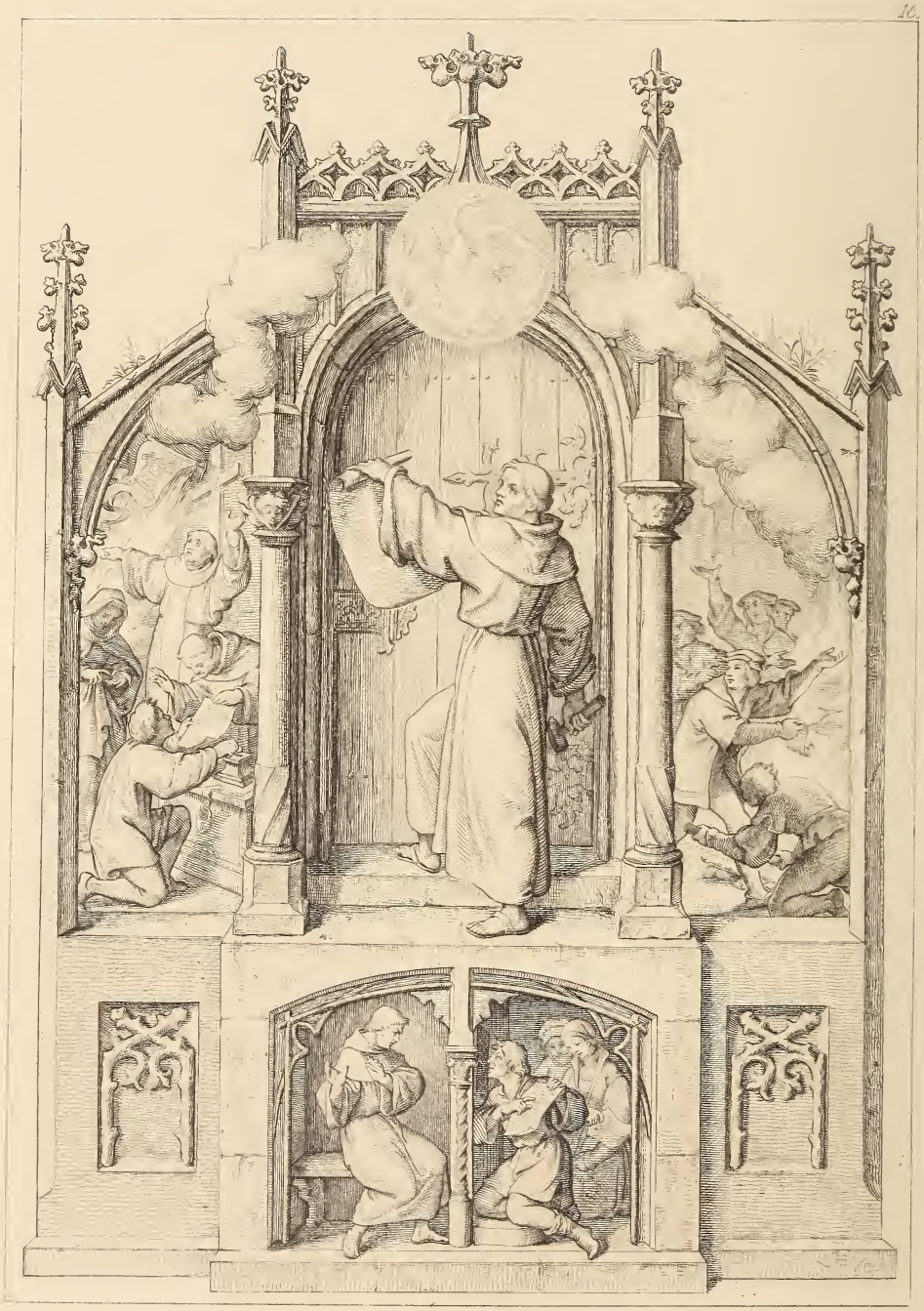
IN the spring of 1515, Staupitz, being sent by the Elector to collect relics in the Netherlands for the new church of All Saints at Wittenberg, deputed Luther to discharge his functions as vicar-general during his absence, which seems to have lasted till late in the following year. In the first place, he enjoined Luther to make a visitation among the convents of his province in Misnia and Thuringia. "Therefore," says Mathesius, "Luther journeyed from one convent to another, helping to improve the state of the schools, and admonishing the brethren of his province to hold to the Bible, and withal to live in holiness, concord, and chastity." His letters show us the nature of his work and the spirit in which he fulfilled it. In Erfurt (where, eleven years before, he had put on the cowl and performed the meanest household offices), he appointed as prior his friend and former tutor John Lange, "seeing that he was a good Greek and Latin scholar, but what is still more, an honest and worthy man." He

exhorts Lange to hold out a helping hand to one of his monks who had fallen into sin, saying, "Be not angry that we have to suffer such a scandal. * * We are called, and baptized, and commanded to bear one another's burdens; * * and to cover the shame of our brother because Christ has covered ours. Therefore take heed to thyself, and be not so pure that thou wilt not touch the impure, or refusest to bear with, and screen and wash away their impurity." On the other hand, he advises the Provost of Litzkau, notwithstanding the sense of his own sinfulness, to enforce a merited punishment in the case of a fallen brother: "Thus in thy heart be humble and gentle towards him, but with thy hand and authority thou art bound to exercise severity; for the authority is not thine, but God's, while the humility is not God's, but thine." To the Prior of Neustadt, who could not agree with his monks, he writes: "Thou art indeed seeking and striving after peace, but on a false way, for thou seekest such as the world gives and not Christ. He has not peace whom none molest, but he has peace whom all men and things disturb, and who yet bears it all calmly and cheerfully." As the dissensions continued, Luther saw it needful to remove the prior for peace' sake, but writes to the monks: "If you do not receive those who are set over you, as from God, with a spirit of prayer, I tell you beforehand, you will have no peace and good order, even though St. John the Baptist were your prior."

In an oration which he sent to the Provost of Litzkau, and was probably intended to be delivered before the Lateran Council, he thus describes the state of the Church: "In these

our days, the whole ground is covered, nay, heaped up, with the rubbish of all manner of diverse doctrines ; together with such a multitude of precepts, human doctrines, and superstitious observances, that the people are rather stupified than instructed, so that the Word of Truth can barely shine through ; nay, in many places, not a ray of it is visible." No wonder that we next find him in the character of a Reformer.

In the autumn of 1516, the plague broke out in Wittenberg. Lange advised Luther to flee. He replied : "Whither shall I flee ? I hope the world will not fall to pieces if brother Martin fall. I will certainly, if the plague gain ground, send the brethren abroad in all directions ; but I have an office entrusted to me, and from obedience may not flee until the same obedience commands me to do so. It is not that I do not fear death (for I am not the Apostle Paul, but only his expounder) ; but I hope God will save me out of all my fear." The nature of his offices and occupations he thus describes in the same letter : "I have almost work enough for two secretaries. I do scarcely anything all day long but write letters. * * * I am preacher to the convent, reader at table ; I am wanted every day as parish priest and preacher ; I am director of the studies ; vicar-general, that is, eleven times prior ; counsel for the Herzbergers in Torgau ; lecturer on St. Paul ; commentator on the Psalms ; besides that business of letter-writing which, as I said, takes up the greater part of my time ; and have, moreover, my own temptations from the flesh, the world, and the devil."



XVI.

BELOW, LUTHER IS SEEN REFUSING ABSOLUTION TO PENITENTS PRODUCING THEIR INDULGENCES; AND IN THE CENTRE HE IS AFFIXING HIS NINETY-FIVE THESES TO THE CHURCH-DOOR OF WITTENBERG. ON THE LEFT, TETZEL IS DISPENSING HIS INDULGENCES AND BURNING LUTHER'S THESES; WHILE ON THE RIGHT, THE STUDENTS OF WITTENBERG ARE BURNING TETZEL'S COUNTER-THESES.

WHILE Luther was zealously fulfilling his pastoral and professional duties, he was suddenly met face to face by an evil which struck at the root of all godliness in the flock committed to his charge. Pope Leo X., ostensibly to raise money for the building of St. Peter's, but really in order to maintain his corrupt court, had instituted a general sale of indulgences ; which were, as their name imports, a remission of the penances and good works enjoined as conditions of forgiveness, or a licence to receive absolution upon bare confession, unaccompanied by satisfaction. The sale of these indulgences in Germany was committed to the Dominican monk Tetzel ; a man of loose life, reckless how religion and good morals might suffer, so long as he scraped

together money enough to please his masters and gratify himself, and who scrupled not at the most blasphemous inventions to exalt the value of his wares. When this man was preaching a few miles from Wittenberg, as we learn from Myconius, some of Luther's congregation came to him to confess, having bought these letters of indulgence. "And when they disclosed heinous crimes, and gave him to understand that they would not cease from their adultery, usury, fraud, and the like," the doctor would not absolve them; whereupon they pleaded their papal indulgence received from Tetzel. But Luther was not to be moved by this, appealing to that Scripture, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Luther thus relates the beginning of the contest in the tract against Hans Wurst: "At that time I was a preacher in the convent here, and a young doctor fresh from the anvil, hot and ready in the Holy Scriptures. Now, when much people of Wittenberg were running after these indulgences to Jüterbock, and I (as truly as I hope to be redeemed) did not even know what the indulgence was, I began to preach with great moderation that they might do something better and more certain than buying pardons. I had before preached such a sermon against indulgences in the parish church, and earned little favour thereby with Duke Frederick, who was very fond of that church of his founding. * * * * * * Meanwhile, it came to my ears how Tetzel had preached shocking, frightful doctrines; to wit, that the red cross of the indulgence, with the Pope's arms set up in the churches, had as much virtue as the cross of Christ; that he would not

change places with St. Peter in heaven, for he had saved more souls with his indulgences than St. Peter with his preaching; that when one dropped a penny into the box for a soul in purgatory, so soon as the money chinked in the chest the soul flew up into heaven; * * * that repentance or sorrow or atonement for sin was needless for one who had bought an indulgence, which would hold good equally for future sins."

Luther's first sermon against indulgences was preached on the tenth Sunday after Trinity, 1517, in commencing a course on the commandments, and was directed solely against the abuses committed by the vendors thereof, which brought discredit on the Holy See no less than detriment to public morals; but he did not attempt to impugn their efficacy when accompanied by sincere repentance. Before these sermons were concluded, Luther had seen enough of the iniquities of this traffic in sin to stir up his deepest indignation, and show him the duty of a public protest. Whereupon, seeing that no man of greater weight was willing to step forward and do battle for righteousness, he drew up "Ninety-five Propositions concerning the Power of Indulgences," and without consulting any of his friends, affixed them to the door of the parish church of Wittenberg on the thirty-first of October. It was the eve of All Saints, the festival of the dedication of the church, on which its rich store of indulgences was distributed to the crowds who poured into the town from all parts. In the superscription to the Theses, Luther invited all present, or absent, to dispute on them by word of mouth or in writing. The same day he committed them to the press, and

sent off copies to the Elector-Archbishop of Mayence, and his own diocesan, the Bishop of Brandenburg, with letters entreating their interference in the matter. His call to the scholars and people of Germany echoed more widely than Luther expected or desired; but his appeal to the dignitaries of the church was fruitless. The Archbishop of Mayence was a partaker in the profits of the indulgences; the Bishop of Brandenburg dispatched an abbot to Luther to express sympathy with his views while conjuring him to keep silence for peace' sake. Luther promised to obey; but within a fortnight from their publication, says Myconius, "The Theses had traversed all Germany, and in a month were spread throughout Christendom, as if the angels themselves had borne them unto the eyes of all men. No one would believe what a talk they made. They were soon turned into German, and found universal acceptance, save in the eyes of the Dominicans and the Bishop of Halle, with some others who enjoyed the fat pastures obtained by the Pope's exactions."

Of his own feelings at this time Luther thus speaks, when reprinting the Theses many years after: "I entered on this affair with great fear and trembling. I was alone, and had entangled myself in the contest without forethought; and on many and weighty points I gave way to the Pope, not only because I could not draw back, but because I sincerely and earnestly worshipped him from the bottom of my soul. * * For who was I, a mean, despised monk, at that time, too, looking more like a corpse than a man, that I should set myself against the Pope's majesty,

before whom not only kings and the whole earth, but even heaven and hell bow down, and are constrained to obey his nod. How and what my heart suffered and underwent those first two years, and in what a sense of unworthiness (not false and affected, but true and sincere), nay, in what sheer despair I was plunged, is little conceived by those who have since assailed the Pope's majesty with great pride and arrogance. But I, alone in the breach, was none so joyous and sure of my cause."

Tetzel answered the publication of the Theses by a set of Counter-Theses, drawn up by Dr. Wimpina of Frankfort, in which he rather sought to crush Luther by the imputation of heresy than attempted to refute him. He, moreover, had a bonfire lighted in one of the public places of Frankfort, to which he walked in procession in the robes of an inquisitor, and after preaching a furious sermon against the heretic Luther, cast his Theses and Sermons into the flames in default of the man himself. A messenger who had been sent by him with an edition of his Counter-Theses to Wittenberg, was caught by the students ; who having bought some, laid hands on the rest and burnt them, after having sent a crier round the town to proclaim that all who wished to witness the burning of Tetzel's Theses should assemble in the market-place at two o'clock. This act was done without the knowledge of any of the professors or authorities, and greatly displeased Luther, who foresaw that though he had no hand in it, the whole blame of lawless violence would be laid at his door.

These two conflagrations form the subject of the engravings

on either side of the principal picture before us. The swan seen above is an allusion to the dying prophecy of Huss: "To-day you burn a goose; a hundred years hence a swan shall arise whom you will not be able to burn."



XVII.

LUTHER BEFORE THE LEGATE GAETAN.

LUTHER'S Theses raised him up many adversaries, and within a few months he had to write in his own defence against Sylvester Prierias, the general of the Dominicans, and censor of the press at Rome, who justified the most revolting of Tetzel's assertions, and the most extravagant of the papal pretensions; against Hochstratten, a professor at Cologne, and head inquisitor for Germany, who clamoured for the heretic to be committed to the flames; and against Eck, a theological professor at Ingolstadt and an accomplished schoolman, between whom and Luther there had recently sprug up a warm friendship. To explain and defend his Theses from misconstruction, Luther drew up a series of Solutions of them, which he sent to Leo X., with a letter, not only expressing his evidently sincere personal veneration for the Pontiff, but also declaring his readiness to submit implicitly to the Pope's decree. Meanwhile, Leo had been induced by the outcries of Luther's enemies to institute a tribunal, under

Sylvester Prierias, to try his doctrines ; and, two days after Luther had dispatched his humble letter, he was startled by receiving a summons to appear within sixty days at Rome to answer for his Theses, before a court presided over by his declared and virulent foe. Knowing that his fate was certain should he appear, the University interceded with the Pope in his behalf, while Luther besought the Elector to endeavour to get him heard in Germany rather than in Rome. Under Frederick's influence, the Pope consented ; and agreed that Luther should appear before his Legate Gaetan, then present at the Imperial Diet sitting at Augsburg. To Gaetan, however, the Pope had secretly dispatched a brief, in which, though the sixty days had not expired, he treats Luther as a notorious heretic, whom Gaetan was ordered to excommunicate, together with all who should afford him protection, unless he should unconditionally recant his errors. Though this letter was not made known till afterwards, Luther's friends apprehended danger, and earnestly besought him not to quit his secure abode at Wittenberg ; but confident in the justice of his cause, he determined to proceed to Augsburg, and having accomplished his journey in spite of a severe illness, arrived on the 7th of October, 1518.

With a real or apparent kindness, forming a strong contrast to the commission which he bore, the Legate immediately sent his chaplain to Luther, who represented in glowing terms the friendly sentiments with which Gaetan was filled towards him, and counselled him to throw himself at his feet without delay, trusting to his fatherly goodness. Luther's friends, however,

mistrusting the Italians, insisted on his waiting till a safe-conduct should be procured from the Emperor. It arrived in a few days, and Luther presented himself. Yet the fate of Huss, when similarly protected, could not be forgotten ; and Luther writes to Melanchthon, "I am about to offer myself up for your sake and for that of my countrymen." Gaetan, who could see better on the spot than Leo at a distance, how dangerous a flame would be enkindled in Germany if Luther were touched, probably wished in all sincerity to conciliate matters. At all events, he received Luther with great courtesy and seeming friendliness, and summed up that which he was required to retract in the two articles— 1. That the treasure of the indulgence did not consist of the merits and sufferings of Christ. 2. That faith in the partaker was needful to the efficacy of the sacraments. Luther threw himself at the Legate's feet, and declared himself ready to recant if he could be proved to be in error from Scripture or the Fathers. Gaetan demanded a simple recantation, refusing to dispute when he came only to instruct, yet inadvertently suffered himself to enter into an argument in which he proved no match for his opponent, was foiled, and forgot his dignity in his anger. The interview was three times resumed ; but at last, when Luther confuted the Legate by the very papal Constitutions on which he rested his case, and whose authority Luther disputed, Gaetan bade him once more to recant, or begone from his presence and never more appear.

Luther retired in silence. He, however, sent a very humble letter to the Cardinal, begging to be convinced of his error by

clear proof, acknowledging that he had often expressed himself with undue vehemence, and promising amendment, &c. No answer arriving within three days, he and his friends became, with justice, alarmed for his safety. He therefore drew up two letters, one to Gaetan, the other to the Pope, indignantly spurning the imputation of heresy, and appealing "from Leo ill informed to Leo better informed;" and then, having procured a horse and guide, fled from Augsburg by night, and travelled with all speed to Wittenberg. Two days after, his appeal to the Pope was posted up on the doors of Augsburg Cathedral by some of the authorities of the place. Having on his way back learnt the contents of the Pope's letter to Gaetan, which were now made public, as there was no longer any object in concealing them, and fearing to involve his sovereign in difficulties, he wrote to the Elector, intimating his purpose of retiring into France. But the Elector, doubtless unwilling to lose so distinguished an ornament of his University, begged him to wait awhile, and the University opposed his project most earnestly; and therefore for the present he resumed his ordinary functions with redoubled energy, writing to Link, "We are all as busy here as so many ants."



XVIII.

LUTHER'S DISPUTATION WITH ECK.

WE have seen Luther upholding the fundamental principles of Christian morals and spiritual religion in defiance of the impersonation of hierarchical power in Gaetan; he was next called to maintain the groundwork of free Christian thought against the representative of the Schoolmen.

Dr. John Mayer, of Eck, professor of theology in the University of Ingolstadt, was one of the most eminent scholars and disputants of Germany at this time. His fame had spread into foreign countries, and he had travelled into Italy to sustain scholastic theses, where his success had earned him a brilliant reputation. Notwithstanding his former attack upon Luther, he had met him as a friend at Augsburg, and, with Luther's concurrence, proposed to hold a disputation with Carlstadt at Leipsic on the freedom of the will. When, however, Eck published to the world the list of the theses which he proposed to defend, it was clear that they were directed rather against Luther than

Carlstadt, and therefore Luther felt bound to take part in the contest. It commenced on the 17th of June, 1519, in the presence of the sovereign, Duke George of Saxony, who had insisted on the disputation taking place, in spite of the opposition of the bishop and the heads of the university. The disputation opened between Carlstadt and Eck on the doctrines of grace, and was carried on for some days with no signal results. The dispute with Luther which followed, turned on the origin of the Pope's supremacy, purgatory, indulgences, and the nature of repentance, satisfaction, and absolution. Eck rested the supremacy of the Pope on the famous passage in Matt. xvi. 18, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Luther, while by no means denying the actual sepremacy of the Pope, declared the doctrine now propounded concerning its origin to be of modern invention, and never received by the whole of Christendom, but only by the Latin Church. With regard to the passage in Matt. xvi., he maintained the interpretation now general among Protestants, and given long before his day by some ecclesiastical authorities, justifying it by the texts which speak of Christ as the sole Head of His Church, and by the facts of church history. Thus the Pope's headship became a mere question of ecclesiastical organization, though, in that point of view, Luther at this time still strenuously maintained its importance. It proves how wide an influence Luther's doctrines must have obtained, that on the question of indulgences, his opponent conceded nearly all the important points for which Luther contended.

Eck, finding himself likely to be outshone in learning and worsted in debate, endeavoured to throw suspicion on Luther, by showing his agreement on some points with the abhorred Hussites—an artifice which Luther indignantly exposed, while he, however, asserted that among the articles of Huss some were undoubtedly true and Christian, and the Council had not intended to condemn such, but only those which were erroneous. Eck replied that all were rejected and condemned, adding, "Reverend father, if you believe that a council can err, you are to me as a heathen man and a publican!"

The victory in this contest was, as usual, claimed by both sides. The questions were referred to the universities of Wittenberg and Ingolstadt for decision, but the controversy was vigorously carried on in writing, and new combatants joined in the strife. "But," says Mathesius, "as the scholastic theology and philosophy had already been overthrown by God's Word, so now the greatness of the Pope, together with that of his decretals and bulls, began to wane from the time of the Leipsic disputation."

Notwithstanding polemics, Luther found time to write various works of edification during this and the following year. Thus, immediately after his return to Wittenberg in September, he published what is esteemed by many the most profound and valuable of his works, the "Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians;" and in the same month wrote his "Tessaradecas Consolatoria," or "Consolations under all the Crosses that befall every Christian Man," addressed to the Elector when suffering

under a severe illness. In the course of this year appeared also his "Commentary on the first twenty-two Psalms," and a number of tracts suited to the various emergencies of the Christian life. In March, 1520, he published his "Essay on Confession" and "Sermon on Good Works," and, a little later, a "Devotional Manual of Meditations on the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments," besides composing a number of his "Postils."



XIX.

LUTHER BURNING THE POPE'S BULL.

UP to this time, Luther had been engaged in combating the abuses of the papal system, in the vain hope that the heads of the Church might be brought to recognize the necessity of a reform ; but his dispute with Eck had forced him to set foot in a new field of thought, while the obstinate persistence of the court of Rome in treating questions of truth or error, on which hung the salvation of men's souls, as a mere struggle for revenue and worldly power, left him no choice but either to crush out his conscience and reason, or else to follow them, and them alone, to whatever unforeseen lengths this resolve might lead him. The result Mathesius thus gives us : "But Luther, who hitherto had only disputed and thrown out questions touching the Pope's supremacy, which he would gladly have upheld and helped to fortify, now came to a clear persuasion from the Word of God, that the Pope of Rome, whom heretofore all men had taken to be a god upon earth, and most holy, was surely the adversary

of God and Jesus Christ ; for that he lifted himself up above our Lord Jesus Christ, corrupted the true worship of God, and brought great error and harm on all Christendom."

Meantime, a last fruitless attempt at reconciliation had been made, rather by the Nuncio Miltitz himself, than by those who sent him, armed with seventy briefs, to take Luther prisoner and bring him to Rome. Miltitz was a German, and saw that no less was at stake than the Church's grasp of Germany, if Luther was dealt harshly with. Both he and Luther would fain have averted such a rending asunder of Christendom ; but neither could have entertained much hope of success when they looked at the spirit prevailing in Germany and in Rome. For, while Miltitz was heaping disgrace on Tetzel and courtesy on Luther, Eck was working busily at Rome to procure the ruin of his hated rival ; and on the 15th of June, 1520, a Bull of Excommunication against Luther and his adherents was drawn up by the Pope and College of Cardinals, with the publication of which Eck was entrusted.

The negotiations with Miltitz had not hindered the course of Luther's thoughts or pen. In June, he put forth his famous "Address to the Christian Nobles of Germany, on the Improvement of the Christian Condition." This was in truth an appeal to the laity against the whole hierarchical system, in which, starting from the great principle that "all baptized Christians are truly priests, there is no difference but that of office between them;" he asserts the independence and divine origin of the secular power, and the right of all Christians to interpret the

Scriptures or to convoke a council. This work was followed by his essay "On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church," in which he attacked the doctrine of the seven sacraments; and his "Sermon on the Liberty of a Christian Man," proclaiming in its fullest form the doctrine of justification by faith alone. These three books may be said to contain the kernel of the whole Reformation, and the enthusiasm with which they were received showed that Germany was ripe for the approaching transition. The famous Franz von Sickingen offered him an asylum if violence should threaten; and Sylvester von Schaumburg writes to him in June not to flee into Bohemia if the Elector should forsake him, "for I and some hundred more noblemen will stand by you faithfully, and protect you from peril at the hand of your enemies, so long as the righteousness of your cause has not been refuted in a universal Christian assembly."

Eck chose Leipsic, where he had Duke George and the university on his side, as the most favourable place for the first promulgation of the Pope's Bull; but it was instantly torn down by the students, who insulted Eck so much, that in fear of his life he fled to Erfurt. Here the students, seizing the Bull, threw it into the river, saying, "Bulla est, in aquam natet"—"It is a bubble, let it swim." To bring it to Wittenberg was felt to be so dangerous an undertaking, that the Elector of Brandenburg, with the Bishop and the Duke of Mecklenburgh, came in person to proclaim it. Yet even they had to desist from the enterprise, for the municipal authorities declared that they would resist its publication by force if needful. When, however, news reached

Wittenberg that in virtue of it Luther's writings had been burnt at Mayence, Louvain, Cologne, and other cities, Luther retaliated by convening a meeting of the doctors, students, and citizens on the 10th of December, at the Elster Gate ; where, a fire of wood having been kindled by a master of arts, Luther cast into the flames the whole of the decretals and canon law, with the writings of Eck and Emser, and last of all the Bull, exclaiming, "Because thou hast troubled the Holy One of the Lord, so be thou troubled and consumed by the fire everlasting ;" and then returned in procession into the town.

The next day, at the close of his ordinary college lecture, he solemnly warned his hearers to beware of the Pope's laws and statutes ; that the decretals had been burnt was nothing, the real thing needful was, that they should set themselves against the Pope's wicked and antichristian domination with all their hearts, as they valued their eternal salvation.

Shortly afterwards he published a justification of this act, in which he extracted thirty propositions for condemnation from the canon law and papal decrees : such as, "The Pope is not subject to God's commandments, nor bound to obey them ;" "It is not a precept, but a counsel, when St. Peter tells Christians to be subject to kings ;". "The Pope is not bound to obey the decrees of Christian councils," &c.



XX.

LUTHER'S ENTRANCE INTO WORMS.

AFTER a few months of unremitting labour at his writings, carried on with the more energy because he "believed that the Papists would never rest till they had his blood, and the time left for him to work might be short," Luther was called to answer for his doctrines before the highest earthly tribunal—the assembled Diet of the Emperor and Estates.

The youthful Emperor, Charles V., who had ascended the throne in June, 1520, had been repeatedly besought by the papal nuncio Aleander, to cause Luther's books to be burnt throughout the empire; but, on the other hand, the Elector of Saxony, to whom Charles mainly owed his crown, had begged that no steps might be taken against Luther until he should have been heard publicly in his own defence. Some correspondence ensued between the Emperor and Elector as to whether or not Luther should be cited before the Diet. Luther himself desired such an opportunity of bearing witness to the truth before the whole

world, and writes to Spalatin, on first hearing of the proposal, (No. 277), "If I should be summoned, so far as it depends on me, I will be carried thither sick if I cannot go sound ; for I cannot doubt that the Lord calls me, if the Emperor does so. And then, if violence be used, as is probable (for assuredly they will not summon me with the idea of bringing me to a better mind), we must commend the matter to the Lord. He liveth and reigneth yet, who preserved the three men in the fiery furnace of the king of Babylon. And if He do not choose to preserve my head, what is that worth compared to Christ's, who was slain with such great ignominy and shame, to the offence of all and the destruction of many. * * * Expect everything from me but flight or recantation. I will not even fly, much less recant. So help me the Lord Jesus ! Amen."

But the papal party had no wish that Luther should gain increased notoriety by appearing before the Diet ; their object was to get him condemned unheard. And to this end, Aleander made a skillful and eloquent oration of three hours before the Diet, recounting Luther's heresies and acts of disobedience, and entreating for an immediate sentence to be passed. The Emperor was moved so far as to issue an edict for the destruction of Luther's books ; but the Estates refused to publish it unless Luther were first summoned under a safe-conduct to appear before them, and then called upon to retract whatever he might have written contrary to the holy Christian faith as received from the Fathers. If he refused to do this, then they would assist the Emperor to enforce the edict ; but meanwhile they prayed that

the abuses which had been perpetrated in Germany by the papal court should be duly and fully redressed. To this counsel the Emperor acceded as far as regarded Luther, and ordered the nobles to draw up a statement of the grievances complained of.

Luther began his journey on the 2d of April, 1521, his conveyance being provided by the town council of Wittenberg. As he went along, his progress resembled a triumph ; from some of the towns the people coming out as far as two miles to meet him. But he also encountered the imperial messengers sent to post up the edict for the burning of his books, and on this the herald sent to conduct him asked him if he would venture further. "Yes," he replied, "if they publish the ban in every town, I will go on, trusting in the Emperor's safe-conduct." In Erfurt, Gotha, and Eisenach he preached, and in Heidelberg held a public discussion. From place to place his friends and adherents warned him of the fate of Huss at Constance ; but he only answered, "And though they made a fire from Wittenberg to Worms, and the flame thereof blazed up to heaven, inasmuch as I have been cited, I will appear in the name of the Lord, and step into the jaws of behemoth, between his great teeth, and confess Christ, and let him judge."

When the popish party at Worms heard that Luther had obeyed the call and was on his way, they began to tremble, for they saw that it would greatly further his cause if he were allowed a public hearing ; but they had hoped that he would have been frightened into disobedience by the example of Huss, and might then have been condemned for contumacy. Glapio, the Emperor's

confessor, wrote in most friendly terms, offering to meet him a short distance from Worms and negotiate with him secretly, hoping in reality thus to delay him beyond the term specified in the safe-conduct. Some argued the justifiableness of breaking a safe-conduct in such a case ; but this proposal was indignantly rejected, even by Luther's worst enemies among the German Princes. His friends, in their terror, joined with his foes in endeavouring to dissuade him from proceeding ; on which he returned the memorable speech, "If there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs, I would go nevertheless."

On the 16th of April he entered Worms, accompanied by five of his friends, and numbers of the Saxon noblemen who had gone out on horseback to meet him and escort him into the city. The streets were so crowded in expectation of his coming, that he had to be conducted through back lanes to his inn ; yet here the people followed, filling the windows and standing on the roofs to catch a glimpse of him. More than 2000 people followed him in procession to his inn, the Deutscher Hof ; and his room was filled till late at night with the nobles, and even clergy, who came to visit him. Among these was the Landgrave, Philip of Hesse, from this time one of his most faithful adherents, who, pressing his hand at parting said, "If you have right on your side, Doctor, may God be with you!"



XXI.

ABOVE, LUTHER IS SEEN PREPARING HIMSELF BY PRAYER TO APPEAR BEFORE THE EMPEROR AND DIET. BELOW, HE IS STANDING WITH FRUNDSBERG AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE HALL.

WHEN the tumult had ceased at last, and silence reigned over the sleeping city, Luther began to collect his thoughts and seek for strength for the morrow's crisis. His friends have preserved for us snatches overheard from the prayers poured forth in the struggle of that memorable night.

"O almighty and everlasting God, how strong is the world; how little do men put their trust in Thee! How weak and shrinking is the flesh, and how mighty and busy is the devil through his apostles and the wise of this world! * * * If I turn my eyes to the world, all is over with me; for the die is cast, and my condemnation is pronounced. O God! O God! O Thou my God! Thou my God! stand by me against all the world's reason and wisdom. For thou must do it, Thou alone! It is not my cause, but thine own. For I have no controversy to maintain with these great ones of the earth. I could fain live out my

days in quietness, without struggle and perplexity. But thine is the cause, O Lord, and it is righteous and eternal. Therefore stand by me, Thou righteous and eternal God. I put not my trust in any man. That were indeed in vain ; for all that is of flesh faileth. * * *

"O God! O God! Dost thou not hear me, O my God! Art Thou dead? No, thou canst not die, Thou only hidest thy face. O tell me, hast Thou not chosen me for this work? I know that thou hast. Then see Thou to it, O God! * * * Be Thou upon my side, O God! for the name of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, who is my defence and shield, yea, my strong fortress. * * * O Lord, why dost Thou tarry? My God, where art Thou? Come! come! I am ready to yield up my life patient as a lamb. * * * And though my body, which is the work of thy hands, should perish, yea be torn in pieces (if I have but thy Word and Spirit with me, and the body alone is touched), my soul is thine, and belongs to Thee, and shall abide with Thee for ever and ever! Amen! God help me! Amen."

At four o'clock in the afternoon, Luther was summoned by the herald, Caspar Sturm, to follow him to the Diet. As he was about to enter the assembly, George von Frundsberg, a soldier of distinction, laid his hand on Luther's shoulder, saying, "My poor monk! my poor monk! thou art marching to make a stand, the like of which I, and many a general, in our gravest battles have never made. But if thou hast right on thy side, and art sure of thy cause, be of good courage. God will not forsake thee."



XXII.

LUTHER BEFORE THE DIET OF WORMS.

THE moment had arrived which was to decide not Luther's fate alone, but the progressive revival or decay of the Church of Christ ; and Luther entered the assembly, consisting of the Emperor and six electors, the sovereign princes of Germany, the knights of the empire, and delegates from the cities. In the engraving, Frederick of Saxony is seen on the Emperor's right hand, foremost among the electors ; opposite him, on the prince's bench, sits the Landgrave Philip of Hesse ; in the background, close to the Emperor, Aleander is sitting with the Pope's Bull in his hand. Behind Luther, stands his friend Jerome Schurff, who had accompanied him to render him legal assistance.

The Emperor's orator then called upon Luther to declare, first, whether he acknowledged the books, published in his name, to be his ; secondly, whether, if so, he were willing to retract them. To the first question Luther replied in the affirmative ; but asked for a day's delay to consider and frame an answer to the second. His request was granted, and he was reconducted to his inn. Before the assembly his manner was so modest, and

his voice so low and hesitating, that his enemies fancied him overawed at last and about to retract, or at least to temporize. The next day, however, undeceived them. All signs of timidity or hesitation were gone, and he justified his refusal to retract any tittle, unless confuted by Scripture, in a speech two hours long, which he afterwards, by the Emperor's desire, repeated in Latin ; concluding with an earnest appeal to the Emperor and Estates to have regard to the evil plight of the Church, and "take these weighty matters in hand, lest God should pour out the vials of His wrath over the Roman empire and German nation, if haply they should be found condemning God's Word." Being again called on to give a direct answer yea or no, whether he would retract, he replied: "Unless I be convicted of error by the Holy Scriptures or by cogent and evident reasons * * * I neither can nor dare retract anything ; for my conscience is held captive by God's Word, and it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. Here I take my stand. I can do no otherwise. So help me God !"

On the following day the Emperor brought forward a proposal for his immediate condemnation as an avowed heretic ; but the Estates desired time for deliberation. Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Trèves, who was to some extent favourably disposed towards Luther, entered into private negotiations with him ; which, however, came to nothing, as Luther persisted in refusing to abide by the decision of any tribunal whatsoever, except in so far as it rested on Scripture. On this he received his safe-conduct, and left Worms on the twenty-sixth of April.



XXIII.

LUTHER TAKEN PRISONER ON HIS RETURN.

LUTHER'S sovereign, the Elector Frederick, who desired to protect him without coming into collision with the Emperor, hit upon the plan of concealing him for a time, and therefore wrote privately to two noblemen of his subjects to take Luther prisoner on his way back, and put him in security. Some hint of his intention seems to have been given to Luther beforehand, for he writes to his friend the artist Lucas Cranach at Wittenberg, under date of Frankfort, 28th of April: "I am going to be placed in concealment; where, I know not myself. For though I had rather have suffered death from the tyrants (specially from the hand of the furious Duke George of Saxony), I must not slight the counsel of good people. * * * For awhile, then, we must be silent and endure. Christ says, 'A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me.' I trust it will be so with me now. But God's will, which is ever the best, be done in this, as in heaven and on earth. Amen."

Luther thus relates the manner of his capture to Spalatin

(No. 319). After saying how he had been received with great honour at Hirschfield and Eisenach, and constrained to preach, he continues, "When we entered Eisenach in the evening, numbers came out on foot to meet us. At daybreak next morning Jerome [Schurff] and my other companions departed from me, and I went across the forest to visit my relations who live in that neighbourhood. After I had taken leave of them, and was on my way to Waltershausen, just as we had passed the Castle of Altenstein, I was taken prisoner. Amsdorff knew, as was necessary, that I was to be arrested somewhere, but did not know the place of my captivity. My brother, seeing the horsemen approaching, leaped from the carriage, and I understand reached Waltershausen the same evening without hindrance. Here I am, therefore, having thrown off my own garb and put on that of an equerry; and I am also allowing my hair and beard to grow, so that you would hardly know me; indeed I hardly know myself."

The castle of Wartburg, where Luther was confined, was situated on the top of a lofty hill near Eisenach, overlooking the dense Thuringian forest and the scenes where he had passed some of his childish years.

His sudden disappearance gave rise to all manner of rumours. He says himself, in the letter already quoted, "Various reports are current about me; the prevailing opinion seems to be that I have been carried off by friends sent from France." It was at first feared that he had been privately assassinated by the papal party; a conjecture which, according to Pallavicini, put the legates at Worms in danger of their lives.



XXIV.

LUTHER TRANSLATING THE BIBLE AT WARTBURG.

MATHESIUS tells us that "while Luther was kept in great secrecy in the Wartburg he was noways idle, but continued daily in study and prayer, and took in hand the Greek and Hebrew Bible, and wrote many excellent and consolatory letters to his loving friends. * * * But seeing that the power of the Word of God cannot be known without the cross, * * God sends our hermit divers crosses; * * for he is overtaken by a painful and dangerous sickness, insomuch that he well nigh despaired of life. Moreover, the devil torments him with heavy thoughts, and tries to befool him with all manner of strange sights and sounds."

Luther began his translation of the Bible without any help, having no books with him but his Hebrew and Greek Testaments. He completed the New Testament during his nine months' sojourn on the Wartburg, and also wrote within this period many of his Postils on the Epistles and Gospels, together with his Commentaries on the "Magnificat" and the 69th Psalm. But

he was again called away from these simple works of piety, to contend for the truth of his doctrines against Catharinus of Sienna on the Infallibility of the Church, and Latomus of Louvaine (the first who grappled with him by Scriptural arguments) on Justification by Faith. Besides these, he wrote three other treatises: the first, "On Private Confession," which he maintained should be left to the free choice of Christians, not imposed by the Church; the second, on "The Abuse of Private Masses," dedicated to his brother Augustinians of Wittenberg, who had already ceased to celebrate them, in which he denied the sacrificial character of the mass; the third was on Monastic Vows, in which he discusses "not, whether vows must be kept, for that the Word of God declares, but what vows are valid," and maintains that the vow made in baptism, being necessarily the most binding, releases from all subsequent vows which are inconsistent with its own observance. "The book" (we are told by Mathesius) "gave rest to many anguished consciences, who were convinced of the sinfulness of their vows, but also was taken advantage of by many, who, having entered a convent for the sake of an easy and luxurious life, left it again, and scandalously abused their Christian liberty." This work Luther dedicated to his father, as an act of atonement for the disobedience of which he had been guilty in taking the cowl against his parent's will.



XXV.

BELOW, LUTHER IS RIDING AWAY FROM THE WARTBURG. ABOVE, TO THE LEFT, LUTHER AND THE SWISS STUDENTS IN THE BLACK BEAR AT JENA; TO THE RIGHT, LUTHER, AMIDST HIS FRIENDS AT WITTENBERG, RECOGNIZED BY THE SAME STUDENTS.

WHILE thus working in his solitude at Wartburg, Luther was deeply grieved to hear that disturbances had broken out among his flock at Wittenberg. His friend Carlstadt, with some fanatics from Zwickau, had begun to inveigh against human learning, human titles of distinction, and the use of images and other outward aids to devotion; the consequence of which was, that outrages were committed on those who kept to the old forms of worship, churches were desecrated, students forsook the university to learn handicrafts, and illiterate men gave themselves out as prophets raised above obedience to human authorities or even to Scripture. The Reformation was in danger of perishing through the excesses of those who belonged to it in letter and not in spirit. Melanchthon was unable to stem the torrent of innovation, yet the Elector refused to permit Luther to be sent for, fearing that his life would be claimed by the Papists. On

this, Luther determined to go back at all risks, and strive to put a stop to the mischief, having first written to the Elector, publicly declaring that he returned in spite of him, not under his protection, in order that the Romanists might have no pretext for attacking the prince on his account.

The engraving represents a scene which took place on the way in an inn at Jena, where Luther met with two Swiss students, who were travelling from their native land to Wittenberg, to inquire into the new doctrines. One of them, Kepler, thus describes the incident: "In the parlour we found a man sitting alone by the table, with a little book lying before him, who greeted us courteously, bade us to seat ourselves at the table with him, and offered us something to drink, to which we could not say him nay. * * * * We supposed, however, nothing else but that it was a knight who sat before us, dressed after the fashion of that country, in a red bonnet, trunk-hose and doublet, a sword by his side, with his right hand on the pommel thereof, and his left clasping the hilt. * * * Then we asked him, 'Honoured sir, could you perchance tell us whether Martin Luther is now at Wittenberg, or where he may be?' He answered, 'I have certain information that Luther is not now at Wittenberg, but he is to be there shortly. But Philip Melanchthon is there; he teaches the Greek language, and there are others who teach Hebrew, both which I would in all faithfulness counsel you to study, for they are before all things needful to understand Scripture.' * * * Thus conversing we grew quite friendly together, so that my companion ventured to take up the book which lay beside

him, and behold! it was a Hebrew psalter." On arriving at Wittenberg they went to present letters of introduction which they had brought to Schurff; whereon Kepler continues, "When we were called into the room, lo, there we find Martin, dressed as at Jena, along with Philip Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, Nicholas Amsdorf, and Dr. Schurff, who were telling him all that had passed at Wittenberg, in his absence. He greeted us smiling, and said, pointing with his finger, 'This is Philip Melanchthon, of whom I told you.'"



XXVI.

LUTHER ALLAYING THE FURY OF THE ICONOCLASTS. 1522.

LUTHER thus gives in a letter the motives of his return : "I have been compelled to plunge with my life in my hand into the midst of the Emperor's and Pope's fury, if so be I may drive the wolf out of my sheepfold. * * * For I perceive that Satan is casting about how he may not only quench the light of the Gospel, but bring great bloodshed to pass in Germany." (No. 369.)

He arrived at Wittenberg on Friday the 6th of March. On the following Sunday, he entered the pulpit and began a course of eight sermons, continued during the succeeding days of that week, on Charity, the Use and Abuse of Christian Freedom, Image-worship, Fasting, the Holy Communion, and Confession. In such expressions as these he shows that forms and acts must be the fruit of the right spirit, but can never produce it : "Dear friends, the kingdom of God standeth not in speech or in words, but in power and in deed. For God will not have mere hearers

and repeaters of the Word, but followers and doers of it, who exercise themselves in that faith which worketh by love. For faith without love is nothing worth; yea, it is not faith, but only a semblance thereof. Just as a countenance seen in a mirror is not a real countenance, but only a semblance thereof." "Those have erred who have done away with the mass; not that that were not a good thing, but because they have not done it in a lawful manner. * * Hereby it is evident that though ye may indeed be well read in the Scripture, ye do not understand its spirit." * * * "See that ye turn not a may be into a must be; * * lest ye have to give account for those who have been led into sin by your unloving liberty." * * * "For since we have no power to pour faith into the heart, we cannot and ought not to do anything by constraint or force. * * * We must first take men's hearts captive, and that is brought about by preaching God's Word, declaring the Gospel, exposing error. * * With uproar and violence ye will never do God's work; that you will see. And if you persevere therein, I, at all events, will have nothing to do with you.

If I had taken matters in hand with violence and tumult, I should have begun a game that would have filled Germany with bloodshed. And what should I have effected? A mere farce, bringing ruin to body and soul. I sat still, and let the Word do its work."

"Do ye as the Apostles did." * * "When Paul was at Athens he went into the temples and saw the idols and images; yet he did not break or insult them; * * but he went out on

Mars Hill and rebuked the Athenians for their superstition and idolatry."

So powerful was Luther's eloquence, that one of the fanatical preachers against whom he was contending said, on hearing him, "It is as though I heard the voice of an angel, not of a man." His counsels prevailed, and the Reformation resumed a peaceable course.



XXVII.

LUTHER CONTINUES HIS TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE WITH THE HELP OF MELANCHTHON. 1523–1524.

AFTER the disturbances raised by the fanatics had been quelled, Luther resumed his wonted labours at Wittenberg, and especially devoted himself to the perfecting of his translation of the Bible, the whole of which was completed in 1523. There had been previous translations of the Scriptures; but Luther's so far excelled them both in correctness and beauty, that it was even made the basis of the subsequent translations by the Roman Catholics, and it has perhaps contributed more than any other work to fix and purify the German language.

Luther was assisted in this work by Melanchthon, who had come to Wittenberg as professor of Greek in 1518, at the age of twenty-one, and who, from that time till death parted them, was Luther's dearest and most intimate friend, with whom he shared all his feelings, thoughts, and conflicts. As Mathesius says: "God having endowed Melanchthon with special gifts, * * * gave

him to our doctor, as the Son of God gave the eloquent speaker Aaron to his prophet Moses in Egypt." The letters which Luther wrote soon after Melanchthon's arrival in Wittenberg are full of praises of the boyish professor. "Philip Melanchthon," he says (No. 76) "has delivered an extraordinarily learned and clever oration, to the delight and astonishment of all. * * * We soon forgot his outward appearance, and congratulate ourselves with wonder at what we have obtained in him." He even says, in August, 1520 (No. 250), "I know not what to think of myself. Perhaps I am the forerunner of Melanchthon, whose way I am preparing as an Elias in spirit and in power; and it is he who shall trouble Israel and the house of Ahab."

Mathesius too tells us how Luther said to him and other young students, when guests at his table: "Next to the Bible, read Philip's Common-places. That is the best of books, for in it pure theology is summed up correctly and systematically. * * * Gerson, Proles, &c., * * have preserved and handed down to us somewhat of pure doctrine. But our Philip knows how to explain the Scripture, to think over the matter, and then to put it with admirable terseness. So, too, he has learnt how to pray through crosses and temptations, and conversed with the greatest and most learned adversaries, and is in earnest with his theology. Therefore, my young friends, read his Common-places and his Commentary on the Romans with diligence."



XXVIII.

LUTHER PREACHING AT SEEBURG AGAINST THE PEASANTS' WAR IN 1525.

THE engraving before us exhibits Luther standing up on behalf of the civil power against the spirit of anarchy.

During the latter half of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, there had been many risings among the German peasantry, who were mostly held in serfdom, and all grievously oppressed by the exactions, and sometimes cruelty, of the nobles. They not only suffered from the tyranny of their own lords, but from the lawless feuds continually occurring between the nobles themselves, who sacked and ravaged each other's castles and lands without scruple in their own private quarrels ; nay, who were some of them little better than brigands. The rich monasteries of the luxurious and vicious clergy were generally the first objects that attracted at once the hatred of the peasants and their love of spoil. Outbreaks of this kind had occurred in 1514, 1515, and 1524 in the southern and more popish provinces of Germany. But in the beginning of 1525, a formidable insurrec-

tion broke out in Saxony and Thuringia, led at first by a layman named Pfeiffer, but soon joined and headed by Münzer, one of the fanatics of Zwickau before referred to, who, having already formed a religious party, now turned it into a political faction, aiming at nothing less than the overthrow of the whole existing polity and the establishment of a sort of communism under the sway of the saints; that is to say, Münzer's own disciples and followers. Mathesius tells us that Münzer "inveighed alike against the popes of Rome and of Wittenberg; derogated from Scripture, appealing to his own revelations and spiritual dreams; looked for signs from heaven; set up a newfangled holiness, consisting in rising above sense and mortifying the flesh; burnt images; plundered convents; gathered a band of followers; raised a tumult; deposed the old senate [of Muhlhausen, where he lived]; chose a fresh one; dispensed justice. Next he proves, as a prophet of heaven, the duty of making war upon the ungodly; and having enlisted the Mansfield miners, prepares for the onslaught."

In the earlier part of the contest, Luther endeavoured to be a peace-maker, exhorting the princes to redress the well-founded complaints of their subjects, and the people to abstain from violence and revolts.

Thus he says, in his "Exhortation to Peace" (1525): "In the first place, we have no one to thank for such disorders but you princes and lords, specially you blind bishops and insane priests, who even now * * cease not to grind and flay the poor common man to keep up your pomp and pride, till he neither

can nor will bear it longer. The sword is on your neck, while ye think to sit so fast in the saddle that none can unhorse you. * * Yet, unless God be moved by your repentance to avert it, this conspiracy of the peasants must lead to the ruin, wasting, and desolation of our German land by horrible murder and bloodshed. For know, dear masters, it is God's doing that men neither can nor will endure your oppression any longer. You must change your ways, and yield to God's voice ; * * if not willingly, then by force. * * If these peasants do not do the work, others will. * * * * If ye will yet hearken to good counsel, my masters, for God's sake give place a little to wrath. A waggon load of hay should turn aside for a drunken man, how much more should ye cease from your tyranny, and treat the peasants gently as men drunk or led astray. You know not what the end will be ; try kind means, lest a spark be kindled that may light such a flame over all Germany as none can quench."

Again to the peasants he says : "Dear friends, you bear God's name, and call yourselves a Cristian Society, and profess you intend to carry out God's laws. * * * You know God is mighty enough to chastise you, if you bear his name in vain. * * * Yet if all your demands were according to natural law and justice, still ye have quite forgotten the law of Christ, which conquers by prayer and patience, inasmuch as ye have undertaken to wrest your wishes by violence from the authorities ; which is, moreover, contrary both to the law of the land and to natural justice."

At the request of the Elector, Luther undertook a journey to

the disturbed districts, preaching in Seeburg, Jena, &c., in the hope of bringing the people to a better mind. His efforts were not wholly fruitless upon those who heard him, but the rebellion continued to make head. "And when (says Mathesius) the peasants stopped their ears, and, under the name and pretext of the Gospel, behaved as devils, assailing not only convents and clergy, but also their civil governors, and impaled a count and burnt and pillaged the castles of the noblemen, Dr. Luther was stirred up to defend God's order and the estate of the rulers, and to condemn the bloodthirsty doings of the peasants in a very severe book, and to admonish the terrified authorities to destroy such a noxious brood with the power of the sword." The authorities do not seem to have stood in need of such an admonition—the revolt was soon put down, and Münzer executed.

It cannot be denied that Luther, in his horror at the atrocities committed by the peasants, seems to have forgotten in this second book to give a due share of the blame to those who, while they ought to have known how to use power, drove ignorant, misguided wretches to madness by their oppression. His temptation to this error lay no doubt in the circumstance that the papal party took advantage of these troubles to confound the Christian liberty of conscience claimed by the Protestants with the anarchical principles set forth by the fanatics; and thus to represent the crimes of the peasants as the mere consequence of the teaching at Wittenberg.



XXIX.

LUTHER'S MARRIAGE.

LUTHER held views of matrimony singularly just and noble for one trained in a cloister. Thus he says: "There is no relationship so lovely, no communion so friendly, no society so sweet, as a good married life, when husband and wife dwell together in peace and unity." "Peace and happiness in married life is, next to God Himself and the knowledge of his Word, the highest blessing and gift that God can bestow on us."

He seems early in life to have come to a just appreciation of the moral evils resulting from the unworthy esteem in which marriage is held by the Romish Church. Several of his followers among the clergy married at the very commencement of the Reformation, and he always defended their conduct. Yet he thus replies, in November, 1524, to some who urged him to follow their example (No. 1137): "I am indeed in the hand of God, as His creature, whose heart He may change and re-change every moment. But as my heart has stood hitherto, and still stands, it will never come to pass that I shall take a wife. Not that I am * * made of wood or stone, but that my mind is bent upon other things than marrying, seeing that I am in daily expectation of

death * * as a heretic. Therefore I would not willingly hinder God from accomplishing all His work in me, nor that my heart should struggle against it." But in the following June he writes (No. 1212): "I am minded, before I depart this life, to be found as a married man, which I judge that God requires of me, should my marriage be no more than a betrothal like Joseph's." And in his Table-talk, referring to this, he says: "This I had quite resolved within myself to do, before I took a wife, to do honour to the estate of matrimony. If I had been about to die unexpectedly, or were even already lying on my deathbed, I would have had a pious maiden brought to me and the marriage performed, and afterwards given her two silver cups as keepsake and morning gift" (xliii. § 3).

His choice fell upon Catherine von Bora, one of nine nuns who had together quitted the convent of Nimptsch on religious grounds, about two years previously; and its wisdom was proved by twenty years of unbroken domestic happiness. Thus he said of her, that he "prized her more highly than the kingdom of France or the empire of the Venetians; for a pious wife had been given and bestowed on him by God. * * * And everywhere among married people he heard of much greater faults and failings than were to be found in her." And writes: "She is more to me than I had dared to hope, thanks be to God; so that I would not exchange my poverty for the treasures of Crœsus."

The engraving represents the ceremony as it was performed in the house of Catherine's guardian Reichenbach, by Bugenhagen, with Lucas Cranach and Dr. Apel, professor of jurisprudence, for witnesses.



XXX.

LUTHER'S CONFERENCE WITH ZWINGLE CONCERNING THE SACRAMENT. 1529.

WHILE Luther was the means of bringing about a reform of the Church in Germany, the same work was being independently carried on in Switzerland by Zwingle, Œcolampadius, and other divines of less note. Their doctrinal views were in general similar to those of Luther; but they differed from him in regard to the Lord's Supper, maintaining that Christ was present in the sacrament only in a spiritual, not in a corporeal sense; while Luther taught that the body of Christ was truly present and united with the bread and wine, as light and heat penetrate through air, water, crystal, &c., and exist therein without occupying any space or changing the substance of these bodies. (See Confession concerning the Lord's Supper. 1528.)

A controversy on this subject arose between the German and Swiss Reformers, the chief points of which are thus summed up by Mathesius: "The opponents" (Zwingle, &c.) "leant on those words of St. John, 'The flesh profiteth nothing;' moreover,

argued that a material body could not be in many places at once; that sacraments were signs, consequently the elements only signified the body of Christ; and that therefore the true body and blood of Christ were not present with the bread, or in the administering of the Holy Sacrament. The which was thus confuted by Dr. Luther: the text 'the flesh profiteth nothing' does not refer to the flesh of Jesus Christ, which bringeth and giveth life, but man's natural understanding. Further, we ought not to think or speak of Christ's glorified body, which is united with the Divine Nature in one indivisible Person, hath ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, governs and works everywhere, in the same manner as of our natural and human body. For God has given to the Lord Jesus a name and power which is above every name or power. Therefore, although it may seem impossible and absurd to reason, yet God can can do all that He says. Now, Christ's true words stand clearly there, 'This is my body,' * * 'This is my blood.' With regard to which we may not shorten God's hand; for with Him, as the angel says to Mary, nothing is impossible."

After the controversy had been carried on for nearly five years, the Landgrave of Hesse, who ardently desired to bring about a religious and political union between all sections of Protestants, summoned the chiefs on both sides to a friendly conference at Marburg, in October, 1529. He also invited Bucer and Capito from Strasburg, who had taken a middle course, and endeavoured to mediate between the German and Swiss Reformers. The latter accepted the Landgrave's invitation with gladness;

Zwingle without hesitation, though with little hope of a good result ; but Luther was with great difficulty persuaded to attend. The conference was held in a private apartment of the palace, in the presence of the Landgrave and his principal ministers ; but was as fruitless as was to be expected from the circumstance that Luther had declared beforehand that he would not yield, seeing that he had "taken his stand upon the Word of God." When the discussion had lasted three days, the Landgrave proposed that it should terminate by both sides signing a declaration that while they each retained their own opinion, they agreed on the essentials of faith, and recognized each other as Christian brethren. The Zwinglian party at once assented, offering at the same time to prove from Scripture that their differences were not fundamental. The Lutherans, alas! refused, and by this act not only frustrated the noble and wise project of the Landgrave, but divided the Protestant Church for centuries, and consecrated afresh for succeeding generations that fatal error of the Romish Church, that Christian brotherhood cannot coexist with diversity of intellectual apprehension.

The engraving represents Luther and Zwingle standing in ardent controversy, while the Landgrave of Hesse and Ulrich of Wurtemburg are listening to them attentively. Melanchthon and Œcolampadius are seated on the left, engaged in quieter discussion.



XXXI.

THE PRESENTING OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION OF FAITH.

IN April, 1529, the majority of the Diet assembled at Spires having passed a decree commanding the restoration of the mass, and forbidding the introduction of fresh innovations, until the meeting of a general or national council, the minority "protested" against it, claiming the right of worshipping according to the mode which their consciences prescribed, and thus in effect denying the authority of the civil power to command in matters of faith. Such at least was in substance the ground taken by the subscribers to the memorable Appeal from which Protestants have derived their name. It was signed by six Princes, the Elector of Saxony, George of Brandenburg, Philip of Hesse, Wolfgang of Anhault, and Ernest and Francis of Lunenburg; and by fourteen imperial cities, of which the principal were Strasburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, and Constance.

In the following January, Charles convoked the Estates of

the Empire to meet at Augsburg in April 1530, to settle the Lutheran controversy, and restore the unity of the Church.

On receiving notice of the intended Diet, the Elector called upon Luther to draw up a summary of the Protestant articles of faith, which summary was afterwards expanded by Melanchthon into the famous Augsburg Confession of Faith. Luther, as having been condemned at Worms, and peculiarly obnoxious to the papal party, was left behind by the Elector in the Castle of Coburg, half-way on the road to Augsburg, where he could be in constant communication with his brethren, Melanchthon, Spalatin and Jonas, who were selected to represent the Protestant party in the approaching discussion. Melanchthon seems to have entertained some hope, that by concession a union might be brought about between Protestants and Romanists. Luther knew better, perceiving that the latter could not yield one point without surrendering their very citadel—the principle of the infallibility of the Church.

On arriving at Augsburg the Protestant princes placed their preachers in some of the principal churches, and refused to silence them till Protestants and Romanists alike were forbidden to preach. They next refused to take part in the procession on Corpus Christi day. The Elector of Saxony consented to fulfil his office of Grand Marshal of the Empire in accompanying the Emperor to mass at the opening of the Diet, but stood, while all beside were kneeling, at the elevation of the host. The papal party wished the Protestants to send their apology in writing to the Emperor, but they refused to present it in any other manner

than by reading it before the assembled Diet ; and Bayer, the chancellor of the Elector, insisted on reading it in German as well as Latin. This document, signed by the princes as well as the theologians, was presented on the 25th of June ; which thus became the era of the introduction of Protestant principles into political organization.

"Great is my joy," writes Luther to Cordatus (No. 1246), "to have lived to this hour, in which Christ has been publicly preached in so noble a confession, by such confessors, before so great an assembly. Now is fulfilled that saying, 'I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings,' and that other shall also be fulfilled, 'and will not be confounded,' for 'whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.'" "I am quite easy and of good cheer touching our common cause," he writes to Melanchthon, "for I know that it is the cause of Christ and of God. Therefore I care nought for the threats and rage of the Papists. If we fall, Christ falls with us, He, the Ruler of the world. But if He fall, I had rather fall with Christ than stand with Cæsar. * * You are not upholding the cause alone. I stand by you with my sighs and prayers. O that I were so in body too ! For the cause is mine, as much as yours, nay more * * * I beseech you, for Christ's sake, throw not to the winds God's promises and consolations when he says, 'Cast thy care upon God.' * * * 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' Why should we fear the conquered world ?"

In the engraving the Protestants are represented on the right

hand, the Catholics on the left. Before the Emperor Christian Bayer, the chancellor of the Elector of Saxony, is reading the Confession of Faith. Behind him are seated the Landgrave of Hesse resting on his sword, John of Saxony with his hands folded in prayer, and the Margrave John of Brandenburg. In the foreground stands Melanchthon, full of sorrow at the impending division of the Church of Christ. Above, Luther is seen in prayer, and below, the artist has placed the arms of Luther and Melanchthon, with Luther's chosen motto, taken from his favourite 118th Psalm, "I shall not die, but live."



XXXII.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

LUTHER throughout his whole course took his stand upon the Bible. To that he refers every question that arises, as to an ultimate authority; and among the qualifications which he requires for preachers, one of the first is, that they should be diligent students of the Bible. "The Bible," says he, "will make and fashion a theologian, especially when he understands the original languages, and humbly seeks Christ therein with earnest prayer." Yet he was not for an unintelligent reverence for the mere letter of Scripture. "Thou must," says he, "discriminate among the books of the Bible, and take note which are the best." "In this all truly sacred books concur, that they one and all preach Christ. And this is the right test by which to pass judgment on books when we see whether or no they treat of Christ." Again he says, in the tract against Hans Wurst, "That which does not teach Christ is not apostolic, though Peter or Paul taught it; and again, that which preaches Christ is apostolic, though Judas, Pilate and Herod said it."

Mathesius tells us that, "when the whole Bible had been published in German, Dr. Luther takes it up again from the beginning, with much earnestness, diligence, and prayer, and convokes as it were a Sanhedrim of the best men that could be found, who come together every week at his house, viz.: Dr. Bugenhagen, Dr. Jonas, Dr. Kreuziger, Master Melanchthon, M. Aurogallus, * * with G. Rörer, the corrector, and often some foreign doctors and scholars. * * Now when our doctor had looked through the Bible already published, and besides inquired among the Jews and foreign linguists, and picked up good words by asking old Germans, * * he came into the assembly with his old Latin and new German Bible, and always brought a Hebrew text also; Melanchthon brought the Greek text, Dr. Kreuziger the Hebrew and Chaldee, and the professors had their Rabbis with them. * * * Each had prepared himself beforehand for the passage on which they were to deliberate and looked at * * the commentators thereon. * * * Wonderfully beautiful and instructive things were said in the course of this work, some of which Rörer afterwards printed as marginal notes. * * After due exhortation, each stated his opinion, which he proved to the best of his ability by the grammar, or context, or testimony of the learned, till at length, in the year 1542, this work was, by God's grace, accomplished."

In the engraving, Luther is represented standing between Melanchthon and Bugenhagen; on the left Jonas is looking up towards Luther, while on the right Kreuziger is seen in conversation with the Rabbis.


Art. I
Ich gläube an Gott Vater
Art. II
Art. III

XXXIII.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SCHOOLS AND INTRODUCTION OF THE CATECHISM.

BY the Reformation the people passed from nonage into man's estate, and, loosed from the leading-strings of the priests, were made to feel themselves accountable for their belief and actions. Luther saw the necessity of education to enable them to use their freedom aright. The establishment of schools was one of his first cares, and to him is Germany in great measure indebted for her noble apparatus of popular education.

In 1524, Luther wrote an "Appeal to the Burgomasters and Councillors of all German towns, to establish and maintain Christian Schools," in which he says: "I beg you all, dear masters and friends, for God's sake, and our poor children's sake, do not deem this a small matter. * * * For it is a grave and weighty matter of great moment to Christ and the whole world, that we help and guide the younger generation. * * Dear masters, how much are you obliged to spend yearly on arms, highways, dams, &c., * * for a town to enjoy temporal peace and comfort; how

much rather should you spend such a sum on the children of the poor and needy. * * * What do we elder men live for, but to tend the rising generation, to instruct and train them? * * God has committed them into our hands, and will call us to a heavy reckoning on their account. * * Therefore it behoves all those in authority to devote the utmost care and diligence to the young. * * * As I have shown you, the common man does nothing [towards the establishment of schools]; moreover, he is neither able nor willing, nor knows how to do anything. The princes and nobles ought, indeed, to take the thing in hand; but they have to ride, to drink, to joust, and are laden with high affairs of the cellar, kitchen, and chamber. * * * Therefore, dear masters, it is left in your hands, and you have more calling and opportunity thereunto than even princes and nobles."

In 1527 the Elector of Saxony, by the advice and with the assistance of Luther, set on foot a general visitation of the churches throughout Saxony, to supply them with suitable men for pastors, and also to establish good German and Latin schools. Luther took an active part in the work, often examining the poor peasants and children himself, to learn their real mental condition and wants. He afterwards compiled an admirable manual of popular instruction in his Smaller Catechism, of which he says: "I was compelled and driven to draw up this Catechism, or Christian doctrine, in such a brief and simple form, by the lamentable and wretched destitution of religious knowledge which I had by experience found to exist during the late visitation."

Neither did Luther wish to confine popular education within

narrow limits. Thus he says, in the "Appeal" already quoted: "But if there were neither soul, nor heaven, nor hell, and we had no need of schools in order to understand the Scriptures and God's will, yet it were reason enough for establishing the best schools for boys and girls in all places, that the world needs well-educated men and women to keep up its outward condition. * * I speak for myself, if I had children, and could afford it, they should not only learn the classical languages and history, but also music and mathematics. * * * Yea, how I regret now that I have not read more poets and historians!" And again, in a sermon on the same subject, preached in 1530, he says: "And if I had to lay down my office as preacher, there is none which I would sooner assume than that of schoolmaster. For I know that this work is the most useful and honourable of all offices next to that of the preacher; indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the best. * * * Is it not to be feared that may-be an idol-worshipper (I mean of Mammon) will take his son away from school, saying, 'It is enough if my son can read, and keep accounts, as we have now books in German,' and thus set a bad example to other honest citizens? * * * But a community, especially such a city [Nuremberg], ought to contain more men than merchants, and some who can do more than read German books and keep accounts. For preaching, governing, administering the law, all the arts and languages in the world are too few. * * * But such idolators never think how governing is to be carried on, nor remember that without it they would not be able to serve their God, Mammon, for an hour. * * *

"But I hold that it is the duty of the civil powers to constrain their subjects to send their children to school. * * If they have a right to compel able-bodied men to bear arms and man the defences in case of war, how much more may they, and ought they, to oblige them to send their children to school, seeing that a far deadlier warfare has to be waged with Satan himself! * * Wherefore, let him who can see to this; and let the magistrates, when they see a likely boy, keep him to school; and if his father is poor, let them assist him with the Church property, and let the rich bequeath money in their wills for this purpose. * * That were, indeed, to leave their money to the Church!"



XXXIV.

THE SERMON.

THE prominence assumed by the doctrine of justification by faith in the Lutheran system, led to the exaltation of the office of the preacher, through whose announcement of the Gospel faith was commonly produced. Among the Lutherans the sermon had taken the place of the mass, as the means of bringing the sinner into reconciliation with God.

"Therefore," says Luther, "look to it, ye pastors and preachers. Our office is become a very different thing to what it was under the Pope; it is an awful, but a wholesome one. Hence now-a-days it brings much more toil and labour, responsibility and vexations, and withal little reward or thanks from the world; but Christ Himself will be our reward, if we faithfully labour for Him."

"No one filling the office of teacher and preacher now-a-days is fit for his post unless he have joy and delight in Him who has sent him. Moses prayed our Lord God six times that he might

be excused; yet he was forced to go. And so, too, hath He forced me into this office. * * * * O, my masters, it is no child's play."

Hence Luther gives such counsels as these to young preachers (Table-talk, xxii. § 100): "When you are going to preach, speak with God, saying, 'O Lord God, I desire to preach to thy glory; I will speak of Thee, exalt Thee, praise thy Name, even though I cannot do it so well as I ought.' And do not regard Melanchthon, or me, or any other learned man, but think yourself the most learned of all when you are speaking of God from the pulpit. I have never suffered myself to be abashed with the notion that I could not preach well enough; but I have often been abashed and terrified at the thought that I had to speak, and must speak, before God's face about His infinite majesty and divine essence."

Luther thus expresses his view of what preaching should be: "I endeavour to set before my mind a text and to keep to it, and so to explain it and fix it in the minds of the people, that they may be able to say afterwards, 'he said this and that in the sermon.'" (Table-talk, xx. § 25). And again, "Woe and anathema to all those preachers who love to handle lofty, difficult, and subtle questions in the pulpit, and bring such before the common people, and enlarge upon them, seeking their own honour and glory. When I preach here in Wittenberg I let myself down as much as possible, and do not think about the doctors and learned men, of whom there may be some forty present, but look at the crowds of young men, children, and servants, who are

there by hundreds and thousands ; to them I preach, and to them I adapt myself, for they need it. And if the others do not like it, the door is open, let them walk out." (Table-talk, xxii. § 143.)

Mathesius also tells us : " I have more than once heard him say at table, how that in the schools it was proper to dispute and bring forward acute arguments to confute the adversaries ; but that in the pulpit those are the best preachers who discourse in childlike, ordinary, simple style, intelligible to the common people ; who do not propose difficult questions, nor confute the reasonings of their adversaries, nor yet cast censure upon absent magistrates, or monks, or priests, or give sideways blows to those who oppose or dislike them. For in church we had only to do with those present, but in the schools with the absent as well."

These few sayings will perhaps be found to contain the secret of the wonderful power exerted by Luther's preaching over his contemporaries.



XXXV.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN BOTH KINDS.

"A CHRISTIAN should know that there is nothing on earth more sacred than God's Word; for even the sacrament is made such, and blessed, and hallowed through God's Word; and thereby are we all born in the Spirit, and dedicated as Christians." Thus speaks Luther in his Tract "On the receiving of the Sacrament in both Kinds," written in 1522, with immediate reference to the innovations introduced by Carlstadt. "A Christian," he says further, "is holy in body and soul, whether he be layman or priest, man or woman; and he who says otherwise blasphemes holy baptism, Christ's word, and the Holy Spirit's grace. * * The Christian is not made for the sacrament, but the sacrament for the Christian. * * Therefore we beg, nay, we command, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, those who have received it under both kinds not to be persuaded that they have committed a sin thereby, but rather to yield up life itself. * * * For the text of the Gospel is so clear, that even the Papists

cannot deny that Christ instituted the Lord's supper in both kinds, and gave it thus to all His disciples." Yet he would not force the consciences of those who thought it right to adhere to the old form. "In such a case," he says, "the command of love is to be preferred far before the administration in both kinds. For Christ lies more in love than in the forms of the sacrament."

The nature of the view embodied in the Church of the Reformation is well expressed by Luther in his "Sermon on the Sacrament," published in 1519 : "Thus we hold that there are two chief sacraments in the Churches, baptism, and the Lord's supper. Baptism introduces us into a new life on earth. The Lord's supper conducts us through death into eternal life. * * And the fruit of this sacrament is communion and love, whereby we are strengthened against death and all evil. In such sort, that the communion is of two kinds ; first, that we have part in Christ and all the saints ; secondly, that we allow all Christians to have part in us, so far as they and we are able. So that the selfish love of oneself being rooted out through this sacrament, may give place to the universal love of all mankind ; and thus, through the transformation wrought by love, there may be one bread, one cup, one body, one communion, which is the true and Christian brotherly unity."

And again, in his "Sermon on the New Testament, that is to say, on the Holy Mass" (1520) : "Hence we ought to take good heed to the word 'sacrifice,' that we may not presumptuously think to give something to God in this sacrament, in which it is He who gives us all things. We ought, indeed, to offer up a

spiritual sacrifice ; what then shall we offer? Ourselves, and all that we have, with diligent prayer, as we say, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' * * * It is true we are not to lay these sacrifices before God's eyes in our own name, but to lay them on Christ. * * * For to this end he is a priest, as it is said: 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.' And 'He is ever at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us.' * * * From which words we learn that we do not offer Christ, but Christ offers us. And in this sense it is allowable, yea profitable, to call the mass a sacrifice ; not for its own sake, but that we offer ourselves with Christ, with a firm belief in his Testament." * * * * *



XXXVI.

LUTHER READING THE BIBLE TO THE ELECTOR JOHN.

THIS engraving, if not a portraiture of any given fact, truthfully represents the relation in which Luther stood both to this prince and his son and successor John Frederick, of which his letters afford many illustrations ; for these princes undertook nothing of importance, especially with regard to the Church or schools, without consulting him ; and he on his side evinced the warmest attachment, as well as respect for them. Thus he writes from Coburg to Prince John (No. 1215) : " It is a great sign that God loves your Grace, that having given you his Holy Word in rich abundance, and made you worthy to receive it, He further grants you to suffer obloquy and hatred for the sake thereof, which is always a consolation to the conscience. * * * Moreover, the God of mercy shows His favour, in that He makes His Word so mighty and fruitful in your Grace's land, which truly possesses more and better pastors and preachers than any other land in the world. * * And hence the tender flocks of boys and girls are

growing up so well instructed, that it warms my heart to see how youths and maidens know and believe and can tell more about God and Christ than formerly all the monasteries and convents and schools could do. * * * It is as though God said: 'Behold, dear Duke John, I entrust to thee my noblest treasures, my pleasantest paradise: thou shalt be father over it. For I will have them to be under thy protection and rule, and do thee the honour to make thee my gardener and steward.' And this is assuredly true." * *

Luther's counsels to his sovereign appear to have been always dictated rather by considerations of religion than of policy. Thus, when his opinion was demanded as to the formation of a league for mutual defence among the Protestant states, and again with regard to the election of Ferdinand to be King of the Romans, he repeatedly dissuaded the Elector, on scriptural grounds, from entering into any alliance which might bring him into collision with his lawful head, the Emperor (even in one letter declaring that he should be constrained by conscience to leave the country in such a case), while he advised his sovereign to vote in favour of Ferdinand, although notoriously hostile to the Protestants. In the latter case, the danger of such a course appeared so clear to the Elector, that Luther's advice was disregarded.

But Luther's political principles are most clearly exhibited in a letter to the Elector John (No. 1191), written in answer to the question whether, in case the Emperor should, as was expected, take violent measures against the followers of the Gospel, it was lawful to resist him by force of arms. Luther says: "After due

consideration, we find that, perhaps, according to worldly right, some might conclude it allowable in such a case to resort to self-defence, seeing that his majesty the Emperor has engaged and bound himself by oath not to use violence towards any, but to leave them in the enjoyment of their former liberty. * * * But according to the Scriptures, it is nowise befitting any who wishes to be a Christian, to set himself against his governors, whether they do justly or unjustly. * * For although the Emperor should violate rights, and break his engagements and oath, yet that does not annul his imperial authority, nor absolve his subjects from their obedience. * * In short, sin neither abrogates authority nor obedience, but punishment does ; *i. e.* if the electors were unanimously to depose the Emperor, so that he were no longer Emperor. * * * If his imperial majesty choose to molest us, no prince or lord ought to protect us against him, but to leave his land and people open to the Emperor, whose they are, and commit the matter to God ; and no man ought to desire anything else of his prince, but each should stand upon his own footing, and maintain his faith by yielding up his life for it, and not bring his prince into danger, or burden him with his defence, but suffer the Emperor to do what he will with his own, so long as he is Emperor."



XXXVII.

LUTHER VISITED IN SICKNESS BY THE ELECTOR JOHN FREDERICK.

A DANGEROUS illness which befell Luther at Smalcald, in 1537, presents another instance of the friendship subsisting between him and his Prince. Meurer, quoting older authorities (p. 594), tells us how Luther, despairing of recovery, exclaimed: "I commend myself to Thee, O Lord, thou faithful God; I am ready to die when, where, and how it pleases Thee, my God, for thy will is best!" "Scarcely had he uttered these words, when behold his Highness John Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, came to visit the sick Luther, who received the Prince with a prayer for God's blessing on him. Afterwards his electoral Grace comforted the patient with these words among others: 'Our Lord God will have mercy on us for the sake of his word and name, and prolong your life, dear father.' Here he turned away, for his eyes overflowed. A little while after, Luther begged those standing around him, as Philip Melanchthon, Spalatin and Myconius, with Hans von Dolzig, to pray with all their might against

the great prince of this world, the devil. * * * * After this he thanked the Prince heartily for his gracious visit, and for that he had with him endured steadfastly and borne much for the sake of the Gospel; which precious treasure he commended for the future to his Grace's hands. On which the Prince replied, 'I fear, dear doctor, that if God take you from us, He may take his precious Word away with you.' 'Ah no, my gracious Master, that He will not,' said Luther, 'for there are now many learned and faithful men whose hearts are set to do right, and who understand the matter well; and I hope God will give them grace to set their face as a rock and hold firm, and so the truth may be preserved. God Almighty grant it!' he concluded, clasping his hands together. But the Elector said to the pastors present: 'Dear sirs, see to it that you keep us close to the pure Word of God, that we may stand before His face.' * * * When the Elector was about to take his leave, he once more comforted the sick man with many kind words, and at last ended by saying, that if it should be, after all, God's will to take him, as he trusted would not be the case, he begged him not to be under any anxiety about his wife and children: 'For,' said he, 'your wife shall be my wife, and your children my children.'"

In the engraving Melanchthon is seen in the foreground struggling with his anguish; behind him stands Myconius listening to the Prince, while Spalatin is leaning over the pillow of his sick friend.



XXXVIII.

LUTHER'S PORTRAIT TAKEN BY LUCAS CRANACH.

THE engraving before us is a fitting commemoration of the artist to whose affectionate industry we owe our acquaintance with the outward aspect of the great Reformer. Cranach is here supposed to be sketching the first of the numerous portraits which he made of his "Freund und Gevatter," Luther. Melanchthon is criticizing the resemblance of the features, while Spalatin is reading aloud to Luther to pass away the time.

Truly may Cranach be called the painter of the Reformation, the spirit of which inspired all the productions of his genius, and whose heroes he has immortalized in his noblest works. Thus, in the altar-piece of the parish church of Wittenberg, he has grouped around the picture of the first institution of the Lord's Supper three paintings representing the chief rites of the Protestant Church. In the centre, Luther is preaching, while on the right, baptism is administered by Melanchthon, the writer of the Augsburg Confession; and on the left, Bugenhagen, who was

pre-eminently the pastor of his fellow-citizens, is confessing and absolving penitents. Various other altar-pieces by the same master contain similar symbolical embodiments of Protestant thought and feeling.

From Luther's letters, as well as other sources, we gather that Lucas Cranach lived in habits of intimate intercourse with himself and his brethren ; and the artist had also a principal share in setting up the first printing-press in Wittenberg, which became the fountain-head whence the publications of the Reformed party were diffused over Germany.



XXXIX.

LUTHER IN PRAYER AT THE BEDSIDE OF MELANCHTHON.

THE engraving before us represents an event which took place in 1540, when Melanchthon, on his way to the Conference in Hagenau, was taken dangerously ill in Weimar, with a disorder which seems to have been principally brought on by his distress of mind at having consented to the bigamy of the Landgrave of Hesse. The Elector sent in all haste for Luther, who found his friend already speechless and insensible, with his countenance apparently fixed in death. Shocked at the sight, Luther exclaimed, "God forefend, how has the devil defaced this Organon!" Then turning to the window, he poured out fervent prayers. "Our Lord God," said Luther afterwards, "must needs hear me; for * * * I brought to His remembrance all the promises about hearing prayer that I could repeat from the Scriptures; so that He must needs hear me, if I were to trust His promises." Thereupon he took Melanchthon by the hand, and said, "Be of good courage, Philip, thou shalt not die. Although God

had cause to slay, yet He willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. * * * Has He not received again to Himself the greatest sinners on earth? * * much less will He reject thee, my Philip, or suffer thee to perish in sin and sorrow. * * * Therefore trust in the Lord, who can kill and make alive again." Melanchthon having revived enough to express his wish not to be called back to earth, Luther replied, "No, my Philip, thou must serve our Lord yet longer here;" and, fetching some food, forced the unwilling Melanchthon to take it with the threat: "Thou must swallow it, or I will speak the ban over thee." Melanchthon, after his recovery, declared that he could truly say that he had been called back from death to life, and if Luther had not come, he must have died.

This is one instance out of many of Luther's strong faith in the power of prayer. He said once, as Mathesius tells us, "I have prayed our Philip, and my Kate, and Master Myconius out of the jaws of death." And in the Table-talk (xv. § 1) he says, "No one believes how effectual and mighty is prayer, and how much it can bring to pass, but he who has learned it by experience, and proved it himself. * * This I know, that so often as I have prayed fervently, with utter earnestness, I have been richly heard, and have received more than I asked. God has, indeed, sometimes tarried, but He has come notwithstanding."



XL.

LUTHER'S SINGING SCHOOL IN THE HOUSE; AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE GERMAN HYMN.

IN framing the services of the Reformed Church, Luther recognised the great importance of music as an element of public worship. He himself composed the music for the first German mass that was sung at Wittenberg, and his beautiful chorales for many of the hymns which he wrote are well known. When about to engage in this work, he invited Walther and Rupff—as the best musicians of his time—to come to Wittenberg, and studied thorough-bass under them. Walther says that, having remarked with wonder the admirable manner in which Luther adapted the notes, both to the accent and spirit of the words, in his German Sanctus, he asked him one day where he had obtained instruction in this art; on which Luther smiled, and answered, "The poet Virgil has taught it to me, who knows how to adapt his words and rhythm so skillfully to the story which he relates. So, too, in music, every note and phrase should be regulated by the text."

So early as 1525 he published his first collection of hymns and psalms, in the preface to which he says, "And I have had them set to music, arranged for four voices, because I desire that the young, who must and ought to be instructed in music and other liberal arts, should have somewhat to take the place of wanton and carnal songs, and in their stead learn something wholesome, and thus imbibe what is good along with what is pleasant, as is fitting for youth. Also because I am not of opinion that the arts should be felled to the earth and die out through the Gospel, as some superstitious persons pretend; but I would fain see all arts, specially music, in the service of Him who has given and created them." Again, in the Table-talk (lxviii. § 1) he says, "It is absolutely necessary to retain music in the schools. A schoolmaster must be able to sing, or I would not look at him. Neither should young men be ordained to the ministry, unless they have been well trained and practised beforehand in the schools." And Meurer tells us that, in his preface to the "Harmonies for the Passion of Christ," he wrote a special eulogy of music, saying how "it has been implanted in all and every creature since the foundation of the world. For even the air, which in itself is invisible, and not perceptible by any of our senses, and least of all musical, but quite dumb, yet is turned into a mere motion, which we first hear, and then also feel, by which the Holy Spirit hints to us wonderful mysteries."



XLI.

LUTHER'S SUMMER PLEASURES IN THE MIDST OF HIS FAMILY.

THE love of nature was a striking feature in Luther's character, no less than the warmth of his domestic affections. "Ah," said he once, looking at his children, "how great, how rich, and how noble are the blessings God gives in marriage! what a joy is bestowed on man through his progeny! * * * the fairest and sweetest of all joys." (Table-talk, xliii. § 47.) "Children are the loveliest fruit and bond of marriage; they knit together and preserve the bond of love. They are the finest wool on the sheep's back."

After his marriage Luther planted a garden, and writes, in December, 1525, to Link: "I thank you kindly for promising to send me seeds against next spring; pray send as many as you can. * * * For while Satan with his members is raging, I will laugh him to scorn, beholding my gardens, i. e. the Creator's blessings, and enjoying their fruits to his praise." And the following summer he writes to Spalatin: "If you will come to me,

you shall see some monuments of our old love and friendship. I have planted a garden and constructed a fountain, both with great success. Come, and you shall be crowned with lilies and roses." Meurer tells us that, in the year 1541, when there was a very beautiful spring, and all around was bud and blossom, Luther said to Dr. Jonas, "If only sin and death were away, we could well content ourselves with such a paradise. But it will be far more beautiful when the old world is renewed, and an eternal spring shall begin, to endure for ever." And as one day his children were standing round the table, looking eagerly at the grapes and peaches on it, he said, "He who would know what it is to rejoice in hope, may see a perfect counterpart of it here. O that we could look forward to the last day with such a joyful hope!"

A similar scene is that represented by the engraving, including, as it does, the table-companions of Luther, to whom we owe the preservation of numberless discourses of his, and anecdotes of his household life. The child with the dog reminds us of that passage in the Table-talk (iii. § 92): "Dr. Martin's little son was playing with his dog. As his father looked at him he said, 'This boy is preaching God's Word with his act and work, for God says, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and every living thing that moveth upon the earth," and the dog will bear everything from the child.'"

Every little thing in nature furnished Luther with food for pious thoughts. Thus, "one day when two birds kept flying into his garden, where they had made a nest, but were repeatedly

scared away by the steps of passers-by, he exclaimed, 'O you dear little birds, do not fly away; I mean you well from the bottom of my heart, if you could but believe it. Just so do we refuse to trust and believe in our Lord God, who yet means us and shows us all kindness; He will assuredly not strike us dead, who has given his Son for us.'" Meurer tells us, that, "in the summer time he was frequently invited to dine by the pastors or mayors of the neighboring villages. When his health allowed he gladly accepted such invitations, generally preaching in the village; but always caused his dinner to be cooked for him beforehand at home, that he might not give occasion for any to put themselves to inconvenient expense by preparing for him. Thus, taking his meat and drink with him, he would allow any of his table companions who wished it to accompany him; but his lute was never left behind, and, so soon as the meal was over and grace said, he would play for half an hour or longer, as time permitted."



XLII.

LUTHER'S WINTER PLEASURES IN THE MIDST OF HIS FAMILY.

THE engraving shows us Luther enjoying with his family the festival of Christmas Eve, so dear to all German households. In the figure of the eldest son, whom Melanchthon is teaching to aim with his new crossbow at the apple hanging in the tree, we detect an allusion to the well-known letter addressed to this child by Luther when at Coburg, assisting to deliberate on the Augsburg Confession (No. 1228):

"Mercy and peace in Christ, my dear little son. I am glad to hear that you learn your lessons well and pray diligently. Go on doing so, my child. When I come home I will bring you a pretty fairing. I know a very pretty, pleasant garden; and in it there are a great many children, all dressed in little golden coats, picking up nice apples, and pears, and cherries, and plums, under the trees. And they sing and jump about, and are very merry. And besides that, they have got beautiful little horses, with golden bridles and silver saddles. Then I asked the man to

whom the garden belonged whose children they were; and he said, 'These are children who love to pray and learn their lessons, and do as they are bid.' Then I said, 'Dear sir, I have a little son called Johnny Luther; may he come into this garden too?' * * And the man said, 'If he loves to pray and learn his lessons, and is good, he may; and Philip and Jos too; and when they all come together, they shall have besides, little fifes and drums, and all sorts of musical instruments to play with, and they shall dance, and shoot with little bows and arrows.' And he showed me a smooth lawn in the garden, all made ready for dancing, and there were hanging up golden fifes and drums, and beautiful silver crossbows. But it was early in the morning, and the children had not had their breakfast yet, so I could not stay to see the dancing; but I said to the man, 'O sir, I will go home directly, and write all about it to my dear little son Johnny, and tell him * * * to be good, that he may come into this garden. But he has a cousin Lena, and he must bring her with him.' Then he said, 'Yes, he may; go away, and write him word so.' * * * *"

Of Luther's kindliness and thoughtful care for all around him numberless instances occur in his letters and the records preserved by his friends. Thus, on occasion of the departure of an old servant, he writes to his wife, telling her to make him a considerable present; and, after suggesting various means of raising the money to do so, orders her, if these expedients fail, to sell some of their plate. For another servant, who from an injury to his arm was no longer able to work, he wishes to purchase a cot-

tage, that the old man might be sure of a home after his master's death. Yet he was so poor himself, that we find, on occasion of his journeys, that his travelling expenses had to be defrayed by the prince or university, and that the Elector appears to have been in the habit of presenting him with a gown when he saw that it was needed. Indeed, he seems often to have brought himself to the verge of distress by his liberality, while he constantly refused presents, or even to receive any remuneration for his writings, or for his lectures as a professor of the University.



XLIII.

LUTHER BESIDE THE COFFIN OF HIS DAUGHTER MAGDALENE.

LUTHER was called to learn a father's sorrows as well as joys. When his infant daughter was suddenly snatched away by death, in 1528, he thus writes to Hausmann: "I have lost my little daughter Elizabeth. I cannot but wonder what a sick, yea, almost womanish heart she has left me, so greatly do I grieve over her. I had never imagined beforehand how tender a father's heart grows towards his children." But a far heavier trial befell him in 1542, when his eldest and favourite daughter Magdalene died, at the age of fourteen; of whom he says (Letters, No. 2096), "I loved her indeed, and not even because she was my own flesh so much as because of her gentleness and docility and perfectly dutiful conduct. * * I have, indeed, loved her most ardently." We learn from the Table-talk (xlviii. § 9), that when she was lying dangerously ill Luther said: "I love her very dearly; but, dear Lord, since it is thy will to take her from me, I shall gladly know her to be with Thee." And going up to

his daughter's bedside, he said to her, "Magdalene, my child, you would gladly stay here with your father, would you not? and yet be willing to depart to your other Father?" She replied, "Yes, dearest father, as God will." "My darling child, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" then turning aside, he said, "I love her very, very dearly; if the flesh is so strong, how strong will the spirit be?"

As he saw her lying in her coffin, he exclaimed, "Thou darling Lena, how happy art thou now! thou wilt arise again, and shine as a star, yea, as the sun. * * * I am joyful in the spirit, yet after the flesh I am very sad; the flesh will have its way; parting is more painful than can be expressed. How strange it is to know so surely that she is at peace and happy, and yet to be so sad." So, too, as some were expressing sorrow for his loss, he replied, "You ought to rejoice rather, for I have sent a saint to heaven, yea, a living saint. O that we all might have such a death! Such a death I could fain die this hour!"



XLIV.

LUTHER AND HANS KOHLHASE.

IN his notes to these plates Professor Gelzer says: "To illustrate at once Luther's moral courage and the power of his name, the artist has availed himself of the story of a secret interview held by the Reformer with the unhappy Hans Kohlhase, who, once a man of respectable character and position, at last, from resentment and exasperation at injustice for which he was unable to obtain redress, became a robber and highwayman, and in 1540 ended his life upon the wheel. Originally no doubt a robust and energetic nature, his outraged sense of justice and wildly passionate temper had driven him into a career of crime and ruin. His was certainly a character which must have inspired the Reformer with the liveliest sympathy; for Luther's soul, too, concealed abysses of passion, from which, however, his better spirit and his faith saved him.

"According to the account given in the Chronicle of Peter Haffitt, the misguided man was induced to repair to Luther in

secret by a warning letter which he received from Luther, calling upon him with all earnestness to change his ways. Without giving his name, he supplicated Luther to grant him an interview. Then it occurred to the Doctor that it might perhaps be Kohlhase, so he went himself down to the gate and said to him: 'Numquid tu es Hans Kohlhase?' and Kohlhase answered, 'Jam Domine Doctor.' On this the Doctor let him in, conducted him privately into his own chamber, and sent for Melanchthon, Cruciger, and other theologians. After they had come, Kohlhase related the whole affair to them, and they stayed listening till late in the night. Early in the morning Kohlhase confessed to the Doctor and received the sacrament, and promised him to desist from his evil ways, and henceforth to do no more harm in the land of Saxony; which promise he also kept. After this he departed, unknown and unremarked, from the place; for they had consoled him by saying that they would use their endeavours to get him righted, so that his affairs might come to a good end.

"As their efforts, however, were not successful, Kohlhase went back to club-law and violence.

"In the engraving Kohlhase is represented as in a state of despair, throwing himself before Luther as the only one in whom he still believes, whom he still respects; Luther, on the other hand, receives him with a look of the deepest sadness and compassion, seeing in his benighted soul the traces of a great and holy energy, over whose decay and ruin he mourns."



XLV.

LUTHER MINISTERING TO THE SICK AND DYING IN TIME OF PESTILENCE.

THREE times during Luther's ministry did the plague break out at Wittenberg, in 1516, 1527, and 1537, and on each occasion he remained faithful at his post, in spite of the earnest entreaties of his friends to avoid the danger. The first of these pestilences has been alluded to in Section XV. On the second occasion the University was removed to Jena, and Luther and Bugenhagen alone remained behind to fulfill the pastoral office among the sick and dying of their flock. Thus Luther practised what he was teaching in the tract he wrote at this time, entitled "An Answer to the Question, Whether One may flee from Pestilence." "We may not lay the same burden on all [strong and weak], but no one has a right to flee, contrary to God's express Word and command; preachers and pastors are bound to stand firm and remain in time of great mortality; for then there is the greatest need of the spiritual office. * * So likewise it is the duty of those who hold civil offices to remain, and not to leave the

people without a head or government. And the same holds good of all persons who have to render service or duties to each other. Yea, no neighbor ought to forsake his fellows unless others be at hand to tend the sick ; for in such cases the sentence of Christ is to be feared—'I was sick and ye visited me not.'" We find from Luther's letters, that in 1539 he even took into his house the four orphan children of a friend, who with his wife had died of the plague. In November, 1527, Luther writes : "My house has begun to be a hospital. * * * * May the Lord Jesus stand by us in mercy. Thus without there are fightings and within there are fears, and truly vehement enough ; Christ is visiting us. The only consolation with which we can repel the rage of Satan is, that we have God's Word to save souls, even if he devour the body. Therefore commend us to the prayers of the brethren, that we may steadfastly endure the Lord's hand upon us, and prevail against Satan's might and cunning, whether by life or death." At the close of this year he writes again : "I can say with the Apostle, 'as dying and behold I live.' * * * God has had mercy on us in a wonderful manner."



XLVI.

LUTHER GOES TO EISLEBEN. HIS DANGER BY THE WAY. HIS ARRIVAL.

LUTHER'S last work on earth was that of a peacemaker. The Counts of Mansfeld, his native province, had long been at variance with each other; and their subjects, among whom were Luther's relatives, suffered greatly from the effects of their continual strife and litigation. They at length declared themselves ready to abide by Luther's decision, and, therefore, notwithstanding great infirmity, he had twice in October, and again in December, 1545, fruitlessly undertaken the long journey to Eisleben, to mediate between them. On the 23d of January, 1546, having received a fresh invitation, he again set out in mid-winter on the same errand, accompanied by his three sons.

For some months previously his mind had been filled with thoughts of death, and a short time before he started on his journey he said: "When I come back from Eisleben I will lay me in my coffin; the world is weary of me, and I of the world; pray God that He will mercifully grant me a peaceful death." At Halle

Luther was detained some days by storms and floods, and when at last he, with his sons and Dr. Jonas, ventured to cross the swollen river in a boat, the passage was not accomplished without considerable danger from the currents and floating blocks of ice; so that he said to his friend Dr. Jonas, "What a triumph it would be for the devil if I, with my three sons and you, should be drowned in this flood!"

At the borders of the province he was met by the Counts with a large retinue, and conducted into his native city with all honours; but so exhausted by the journey, that his attendants were in fear for his life as he entered Eisleben. Through care, however, he recovered sufficiently to transact the business on which he had come, and even preached four times within a fortnight, his last sermon being on the 14th of February, from Matt. xi. 25, 30, on which day he also received the communion and held an ordination. On this day he writes to his wife for the last time: "Dear Ketha, we hope to come home this week, if God will. God has shown us great mercy here; for the Counts have adjusted all their differences, with the exception of two or three points; one of which is, that the two brothers, Count Gerhard and Count Albert, shall become as brethren again; the which I mean to take in hand to-day, by inviting them to dine with me, and thus bringing them to speech with each other."


DOMINE
MANET
ETERNUM

XLVII.

LUTHER'S DEATH.

LUTHER'S work was ended, and he was called to his reward. On Tuesday, the 16th of February, his friends overheard him praying thus, while standing, as he was wont to do, in the window: "O God, heavenly Father, I beseech Thee in the name of thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I through thy grace have confessed and preached, that Thou wilt, according to thy promise, for the glory of thy name, mercifully hear me in this also, * * * and graciously preserve the Church of my beloved country unto the end; that it fall not away, but remain in the pure truth, constant in the confession of thy Word, so that the whole world may be convinced that Thou hast sent me. So be it, blessed Lord. Amen! Amen!"

The next morning, feeling unwell, he remarked to Jonas: "I was born and baptized here in Eisleben, what if I am likewise to die here?" Yet he was able to dine and sup with his friends, and many of his sayings, playful and serious, during this last meal

have been recorded. Among other things he remarked, "Twenty years is a short time ; yet in that time the world would become a desert if matrimony were to cease. How completely is this world an ever-fresh creation! God gathers him a Church for the most part out of little children. * * * In the next life we shall be renewed in the image and knowledge of God ; but in such sort, that we, fathers, mothers, and friends, shall know each other again better than Adam knew Eve when she was brought unto him."

A few hours later he himself had entered into rest. After supper he complained of an oppression on his chest, which gradually increased, in spite of the remedies employed, till at three o'clock, on the morning of the 18th, he fell asleep without struggle or pain, surrounded by his sons and friends, and the Counts his hosts, with their families.

About an hour before his death he prayed, saying: "O my heavenly Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou God of all consolation, I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed in me thy dear Son Jesus Christ, on whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and praised, whom the Pope and all the ungodly dishonour, persecute, and blaspheme ; I beseech Thee by our Lord Jesus Christ, suffer me to commend my soul to Thee. O heavenly Father, though I must put off this body, and be snatched away from this life, yet I know and am sure that I shall abide for ever with Thee, and that none can take me out of thy hands."

After a pause he repeated the text, "God so loved the

world," &c. (John iii. 16.) And again, "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." (Ps. lxviii. 20.) Some time after he repeated quickly three times over the words, "Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum, redemisti me, Deus veritatis."

As consciousness seemed to be departing, Dr. Jonas called to him with a loud voice, "Reverend Father, do you die in the faith of Christ and the doctrine that you have preached?" when he answered distinctly, "Yes." Upon this he closed his eyes, and fell into a natural sleep, which soon changed to the sleep of death.

Thus in his death were fulfilled the last words which he ever wrote, probably, indeed, written on the day before he died. They were an autograph in the Bible of the Count's steward: "John viii. 51. 'Verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.' Never see death! How incredible is this saying, and contrary to universal and daily experience! Yet it is the truth, that when a man is earnestly meditating on God's word in his heart, believes it, and thereupon falls asleep or dies, he sinks and passes away before he perceives or is conscious of the approach of death; and, without doubt, departs hence, happy in the Word which he has thus believed and meditated on."



XLVIII.

LUTHER'S BURIAL.

ONCE more we stand before Luther in Wittenberg; but those eloquent lips are silent, and the eye is closed at last that had never quailed in life before Emperor and Estates, before Pope or Cardinal.

By command of the Elector his body had been brought in solemn procession from Eisleben, to be interred in the church on whose gates he had, thirty years before, set the handwriting of doom against the mighty spiritual empire, which had been "weighed in the balance and found wanting." Behind the bier stands his old friend, Melanchthon, who, during a long life, had unfalteringly laboured and fought by his side, endeavouring, in such words as these, to express the true significance of Luther's work, and the worth of his character:

"* * * His teachings consisted not in opinions promulgated with seditious eagerness, but in setting forth the Divine Will and the true worship of God, interpreting Holy Scripture, and preach-

ing the Divine Word, that is to say, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. * * * But if it were my design to pass a eulogy, what a noble oration could I not make on such a life? more than sixty years spent in the most constant and strenuous endeavour to serve God and practise all virtue! No irregular desires or seditious tendencies were ever seen in him; much more, has he many times dissuaded from the use of arms. In his management of the affairs of the Church, he never employed any expedients to increase his own power or that of his followers. This I hold to be a proof of wisdom and virtue above the scope of mere human effort; for it would need nothing less than God's power and grace to curb and govern a spirit so vehement, so lofty, so ardent as Luther's had proved itself to be. And what shall I say of his other virtues? How often have I surprised him praying with tears for the whole Church! * * * And hence it was that, in weighty deliberations on great public emergencies, he was, as we have seen, endowed with such wonderful energy of soul, that he was not to be daunted or turned aside from his course by any sort of terror. * * * Again, he possessed such acuteness of mind, that in cases of difficulty he alone discerned the right path to take. * * * Of his eloquence we possess imperishable monuments: it was such that, without doubt, he is to be reckoned among the greatest of orators. * * * And now he is united to the prophets of whom he loved to speak; now, they welcome him among them as their fellow-labourer, and with him give thanks unto the Lord, who gathers together and preserves His Church!"

When the oration was ended, the corpse was lowered into the

vault prepared for it beside the pulpit whence the great Reformer had for four-and-thirty years proclaimed the Gospel ; and thus was this precious instrument of the Holy Spirit laid in the earth and sown in weakness, to be raised in the last day incorruptible and full of glory.

Well might the Church say with Melanchthon (on hearing of his death), "Not through human sagacity hath the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins and faith in the Son of God been discovered, but it hath been revealed to us by God through this man whom He hath raised up!"

THE END.

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